

Iraqis employ low-tech tactics to counter allies

EDITOR'S NOTE — AP correspondent Dilip Ganguly arrived in Jordan on Sunday after an eight-day assignment in Baghdad and filed the following dispatch.

By Dilip Ganguly
The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — As dawn breaks over Baghdad, men wearing gloves and heavy boots fan out to collect discarded tyres, then set them afire. Other residents search for old clothes, bits of plastic — anything that burns.

It's a strange spectacle, but the aim is simple: to create a thick, black smokescreen that might help shield the capital from allied air strikes.

The bonfires are among many low-technology methods used by the war-hardened Iraqis in their effort to offset the far superior military might of the U.S.-led forces.

Housewives separate papers and other inflammable materials before throwing the daily garbage away.

Teenagers, unmindful of the air raid sirens, collect old shoes, rubbers, scraps of plastic and other refuse that will smolder smokily.

The campaign is spearheaded by members of the Popular Army.

In every corner of this sprawling city of four million people, they search for discarded tyres.

They even remove tyres from stranded or broken-down vehicles, which abound in war-time Iraq because of the lack of spare parts.

The collected tyres are set on fire under the bridges over the Tigris River that connect the western and eastern districts of Baghdad.

Tyres also are burnt elsewhere in the city, sometimes spewing smoke so thick that the sun is blotted out.

Besides reducing the visibility of allied pilots, the smoke may give a false impression to allied surveillance satellites that parts of Baghdad are burning.

The tyre tactic is one of the many ways the Iraqis improvise in their battle against the allied forces.

"We may not be Rambo and we may not have star wars capabilities, but we know how to defend ourselves," said a member of the Popular Army militia who did not give his name.

The militia is Iraq's second line of defence, trained in civil defence and also in hand-to-hand combat methods in case the war over Kuwait reaches Baghdad.

Bags made of jute, collected by Popular Army militia and civilians, are wrapped around the iron railings of the bridges over the Tigris.

Small tree branches and green leaves are fixed to the bags in an attempt to camouflage the bridges from air attack.

Twelve bridges, including six in the central part of the city, connect the two sectors. Four of the bridges have now been destroyed by allied bombing raids.

"We know the jute bags and the tree branches may not save the bridges, but at least we are trying to save our city with whatever we have," said an Iraqi civil defence official.

Some car owners try their own hand at camouflage, smearing their vehicles with mud paste.

Four weeks of intense bombing has had an impact on Baghdad's residents.

There is, however, no visible sign of panic. Residents disregard the air raid sirens, and even the raids themselves, to go about their businesses.

Most of the residents have accepted the fact that their life now depends on their fate, not hiding in bomb shelters.

In Baghdad alone, at least 200 different targets have been hit during the air offensive.

In the first two weeks military targets and communication centres were hit. More recently, the raids have destroyed government and private buildings across the city.

One of the latest targets was a \$16-million conference centre near the Al Rasheed Hotel.



Bodies of victims of an allied air attack on a civilian bomb shelter recovered from the debris.

Red Cross chief says Palestinian situation serious, efforts continue

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The president of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) Sunday described as serious the situation in the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip where a blanket curfew is in force since the outbreak of the Gulf war on Jan. 17.

Affirming that the ICRC was facing "problems" in implementation of the Geneva conventions in the occupied territories, Cornelio Sommaruga also said that the Red Cross was seeking to address the situation.

"We know that the problem in the (occupied) territories is serious... and the long curfew has not made the situation more favourable to the citizens (there)," he told a press conference carefully skirting any direct criticism of the occupation authorities.

"We are working in confidentiality" in the occupied territories, including Israeli prison camps where thousands of Palestinians are detained by the Israeli army, he said.

Earlier, Mr. Sommaruga said that the Red Cross was in touch with the Israeli authorities on the curfew as well as travel curbs which, according to reports, have exacerbated the misery of the 1.75 million Palestinians living in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip.

"We are in contact with the Israeli authorities in order that they would respect all provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention" on the treatment of civilians under occupation, he said.

Israel has imposed a de facto ban on Palestinians who are permanent residents of the occupied territories from crossing from East Bank to the West Bank while allowing easy flow in the reverse direction.

Mr. Sommaruga said he had "no comment" when asked whether he had any indication whether the Israeli occupation authorities might be planning a mass expulsion of the Palestinian people in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip across the river to Jordan.

"I do not know anything about it," Mr. Sommaruga also said that the ICRC was aware of the

economic-related humanitarian problems faced by Jordanians as a result of the Gulf crisis and was contributing to efforts to address the problems as part of a broader programme.

"This is a subject that we discussed during our meeting with Her Majesty Queen Noor (on Saturday)," Mr. Sommaruga told the press conference. "We are not directly involved (in the programme), but are contributing to it through other means," he said and pointed out that the main task of the Red Cross was to extend assistance to victims of conflict.

Mr. Sommaruga, who also held talks with His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan and senior officials, was replying to a question whether the Geneva-based humanitarian organisation was helping Jordan help its population deal with the economic crisis brought in by the Gulf crisis.

A recent survey has indicated that the accumulated economic problems of Jordan had been compounded by the Gulf crisis to the extent that over one million of its people were living under the poverty line i.e. an average household earning less than JD\$89 per month, and about 130,000 to 160,000 of them living in "absolute poverty" i.e. households unable to meet their basic food requirements.

The ICRC president, who left Amman for Geneva later in the day, indicated that he did not make headway in efforts to get Iraqi permission to meet allied airmen and soldiers captured in the 32-day-old war.

Informed sources said in a meeting with the ICRC chief, Iraqi Ambassador Noor Ismail Al Weiss reiterated the Iraqi view that such access would be made available only when Baghdad is satisfied that the allies were also honouring the Geneva conventions and stopped attacking civilian targets. The ambassador, however, also said that Red Cross visits to the prisoners of war (PoWs) could be arranged through "other channels" at a later unspecified stage, said the source without elaboration.

The Red Cross chief told the press conference that his discussions in Amman dealt with "neutral humanitarian assistance" to victims of the war in both Iraq

and Kuwait as well as PoWs. He admitted that the Red Cross had been unable to establish rapport with the Iraqi leadership and expressed confidence that things could better once such contacts were established.

"There is a certain problem of communication between the ICRC and the Iraqi government at the higher political level, and therefore this is one of the reasons I would like to go personally to Baghdad," he said.

A planned meeting between a senior official of the Iraqi Red Crescent and Mr. Sommaruga failed to materialise Sunday. The official's visit to Jordan for the meeting was delayed, reports said.

Creating a "neutral security zone" to protect civilians, evacuating and treating the wounded, protecting religious and holy places, and ensuring the supply of medicaments and relief supplies are the main objectives of the Red Cross, Mr. Sommaruga said.

UN supplies

Reuters adds: Trucks carrying 50 tonnes of emergency medical supplies for the treatment of children and mothers arrived safely in Baghdad Saturday, the United Nations announced.

Iraqi health and Red Crescent officials met the convoy at the Iraqi border town of Khosravi following requests from the U.N. groups that allied forces avoid dropping any bombs on its route.

A statement from the U.N. Children's Fund (UNICEF), which organised the convoy in conjunction with the World Health Organisation, said a seven-member team from both agencies would spend a week evaluating essential health needs of women, children, the elderly and displaced people.

Shortly before the war broke out, Iraq requested that a U.N. team come to Baghdad to study its food and medical needs for vulnerable sections of the population. Since then Iran has asked the Security Council for permission to transport food supplies to Iraq and, if possible, to Kuwait.

Iran's ambassador, Kamal Kharrazi, in a speech to the Security Council Friday, criticised the council for not having responded yet to Tehran's request to send food.

Epidemics threaten Baghdad

Combined agency dispatches

RESIDENTS OF Baghdad face the threat of epidemics because allied air raids have wrecked the sewage system and disrupted water supplies, the capital's mayor said Sunday.

Mayor Khalid Abdul Munim told reporters that cholera and typhoid "might set in soon if the people continue having no clean drinking water."

He said most of the city's water purification plants are now out of order, either because they suffered damage from allied air strikes or because there is no electricity to run them.

"People are coming to me complaining, but I have only my sympathy to offer them," he said. In recent weeks, Baghdad residents have had no electricity and, at best, intermittent water supplies.

Residents of one well-to-do neighbourhood said they received water one day a week.

But most residents in Saddam Township, a low income area that is home to 750,000 people, have to get their water from a canal that is about two kilometres away.

"Some of us even go to the Tigris River to get water for drinking or to have a shower," said one of the district's residents. He did not give his name.

Mr. Abdul Munim said the Tigris was highly polluted and unfit for drinking.

He said the city needs international aid to help avoid "an environmental disaster."

Delegates from United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) were in Iraq Sunday, beginning an assessment of war-related damage to the environment and the impact on people, especially children.

The mayor said that due to bad sanitation caused by the lack of clean water, epidemics of typhoid and cholera were very likely.

Britain's Observer newspaper Sunday quoted Iraqi Health Minister Mohammed Sayed as saying "Baghdad faced 'a very severe risk' of diseases such as diarrhoea, salmonella and hepatitis."

Television correspondent Brent Sadler said many people in Baghdad, living in poor and densely-populated areas, were collecting water from contaminated sources.

British television showed pictures of families washing clothes on the banks of the Tigris and filling pots with water. Other pictures showed children lading water from puddles into containers.

Trees were being cut for firewood, which Sadler said was illegal before the war.

Sadler said Baghdad's water distribution network collapsed almost immediately after the war began because of massive destruction to power plants.

The mayor said 75 per cent of the city's ability to generate electricity has been lost due to allied bombing.

Environmental concerns also are increasing in Iran, Iraq's neighbour to the east.

Iran's official Islamic Republic News Agency said black rain began to fall Sunday in the western Iranian province of Ilam, tainting water and "agricultural resources."

It said the black rain was caused by smoke from bombed oil installations and other targets in areas of eastern Iraq bordering Iran.

Iran's state radio reported that a "state of emergency" had been declared in Tehran, the capital, after air pollution reached critical levels at midday Sunday. The announcement urged residents not to use cars and to stay indoors, but gave no indication why pollution levels had risen so sharply.

Israeli ambassador in U.S. to stay, despite row

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — Israel's ambassador to Washington, reprimanded by President George Bush after complaining about U.S. aid to the Jewish state, will not be recalled, a senior Israeli official said.

Mr. Bush and Secretary of State James Baker criticised Ambassador Zalman Shoval for saying in an interview with Reuters that the United States was delaying aid for Soviet immigrants and not compensating Israel for Gulf war losses.

Asked on Saturday if Israel would recall Mr. Shoval, Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir's media adviser, Avi Pazner, replied: "No, why recall the ambassador?"

Mr. Bush sent Mr. Shamir a protest message Saturday over Mr. Shoval and the White House on Friday issued a tough reprimand, calling the ambassador's remarks "outrageous" and saying they were outside the bounds of acceptable behaviour.

Some Israeli opposition members of parliament demanded on Saturday that Mr. Shoval be recalled and accused him of souring relations with Israel's closest ally.

"In terms of military aid, what the allies are doing in Iraq is the best service Israel has ever gotten," said left-wing opposition politician Dedi Zucker. "It is not exactly the proper time to spoil relations with the United States."

But Mr. Pazner played down the row, calling it a "diplomatic incident which happens from time to time."

Mr. Shoval accused the United States of giving Israel the "run-around" on its request for \$400 million in loan guarantees to help build housing for hundreds of thousands of Soviet Jewish immigrants.

He also complained that Israel had received no compensation for "huge losses" incurred as a result of the Gulf war and demanded that it be met.

One U.S. official said Israel had already received U.S. aid in an airlift of Patriot missile batteries at the beginning of the war to defend it against Iraqi missile attacks.

Washington has long opposed Jewish settlement in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Mr. Baker recently told Congress he was holding up loan guarantees to help absorb Soviet Jews pouring into Israel until he had details about settlement plans in the occupied territories.

Mr. Shoval said every time Israel provided information, the United States demanded more.

But Foreign Minister David Levy said he had spoken to the ambassador who expressed regret.

Mr. Zucker recently revealed that Israel plans to build 12,000 new flats for 50,000 settlers in the occupied territories by 1993 but was not passing the information to Washington.

"They don't lie about it but they didn't give them the figures," he said.

Israel's relations with the Bush administration had reached a peak when Jerusalem bowed to U.S. requests to stay out of the Gulf war and not retaliate for Iraqi missile attacks.

The U.S. housing guarantees have been held up for months because Washington wants stronger assurances that the thousands of Soviet Jews immigrating to Israel will not be settled in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Mr. Levy said Israel last week sent all the clarifications that the U.S. government had sought.

Speaking in an Israel Television interview, Mr. Levy said it may be the worst run-in with the United States that the current government has had.

Rebuking the ambassador as well as his cabinet colleagues, Mr. Levy said, "We have to preserve the rules of proper government, and if we do, the ambassador will do the same."

Mr. Levy cancelled a trip to the United States last week after Defence Minister Moshe Arens, who went to Washington, held hastily arranged talks with Mr. Bush and Mr. Baker.

Airing his grievance in public for the first time, Mr. Levy said that "behind my back, the defence minister went to the United States without coordination of subjects that he was supposed to deal with."

Bush waging personal war against Saddam — paper

LOS ANGELES (R) — The Los Angeles Times said Sunday that U.S. President George Bush refers to Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein in private as a "lying SOB" (son of a bitch) and is waging a personal war against him.

The newspaper, quoting unnamed friends and White House personnel, said Mr. Bush had personalised the conflict in his own mind because he is convinced it springs from "the evil work" of one man — Saddam Hussein.

"He can't understand how Saddam can put civilians — women and children — in harm's way. And he can't understand Saddam's lying," he says. "The guy lied to his own Arab colleagues. Why should I ever believe him? He's a lying SOB," one source said.

Because of this, some Bush advisers expect him to settle for nothing less than President Saddam's removal and the destruction of Baghdad's war-making capability, the newspaper added.

"He's not ready for this war to be over quite yet because there's still too much of Saddam's military machine left," a senior government official said.

The paper quoted sources close to the president as saying Mr. Bush has grown increasingly quiet and reflective as the war has progressed.

"The president is much quieter than at any time that I've seen him over the past 10 years. He's calm, too, but he's also angry. You can see that anger in his eyes," another source added.

"It's a moral as well as strategic mission..." the newspaper quoted one aide as saying. "There will be no deviation whatsoever in terms of what we do in finishing this job. He's not going to be deterred. I don't care what kind of civilian casualties may occur, he feels we're on the right course."

In a separate report, the Los Angeles Times reported that U.S. Defence Department officials said that barring a surrender or diplomatic deal in the next three days, the ground war would start this week, accompanied by an air and sea assault of unequalled ferocity.

U.S. ground and amphibious forces, officials were quoted as saying, had been given orders at the start of the war to be ready to mount a coordinated offensive any time after Feb. 15 and they were now ready.

"The table has been set. We are in position. We can go any time. We are very close to the level of destruction (of Iraqi troops and equipment) that the commanders wanted to see," a military source said.

Another told the newspaper that close to 50 per cent of Iraq's army had been destroyed.

The assault would likely occur at night, military officials said.

The action is expected to be deadliest operation of the Gulf war, army officials said. They expect casualty rates to range from 10 per cent to 100 per cent in some units, depending on size and other factors.

Military planners told the newspaper that they think Iraq might use chemical weapons.

Man at church service attended by Bush demands end to war

KENNEBUNKPORT (AP) — A man at a Sunday church service attended by President George Bush stood and demanded the United States "stop this massacre, stop this bombing" of Iraq.

The man, who identified himself as lawyer John Schuchardt, was silenced only after police officers moved into the church and stood by his side. After a second outburst a half-hour later, he was dragged from the church.

Mr. Schuchardt was in the front pew of the first congressional church, about seven metres away from Mr. Bush and his wife, Barbara. The Bushes sat stonily during the man's outburst.

The incident began when Pastor Patricia Adams asked members of the congregation if they had any special concerns to express.

"We need to think of the 18 million people of Iraq, half of them are children under the age of 15 years old," Mr. Schuchardt stood and said. "We must think what it means to be bombed every day by 2,000 planes and cruise missiles."

Pastor Adams thanked the man for his comments and urged him to sit down. But Mr. Schuchardt persisted, saying "the spirit of the Lord is upon me."

The congregation, in a spontaneous effort to stop Mr. Schuchardt's speech, rose and sang "God bless America." But when they concluded, he began

again. "This is the most vicious, immoral act," he said. "Stop this massacre; stop this bombing."

A man in the church rose and shouted: "This is not a political forum. This is a church of God. Get out of here."

As police were brought into the church, young children were ushered out so they would not witness the confrontation. The president sat impassively during the episode, but occasionally looked behind him at other parishioners.

After being quieted and sitting silently for 30 minutes, Mr. Schuchardt arose near the end of the service.

"I have a word this morning," he said. "I am the voice for the voiceless, for those who cannot worship."

He went limp when police tried to remove him and then was dragged from the church shouting, "In the name of God, stop the bombing."

Mr. Bush appeared upset as he watched the man being removed. But asked by reporters as he left the church if he was upset by the incident, Mr. Bush said, "Not in the least."

At the close of the service, the pastor said she wanted to "apologise for what happened, not only to our guests but to ourselves."

"We need to listen to everybody," she said.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

PRAYER TIMES

04:54	Fajr
06:12	Sunrise (Sabbath) Dhuha
11:50	Dhuhr
14:08	Asr
17:27	Maghreb
18:45	Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Sweetsich Tel. 810740	Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 715261
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 637785	Syrian Orthodox Church Tel. 771751
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590	Armenian International Church Tel. 685326
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440	Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 811295
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757	The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 815817, 654932
Terrassat Church Tel. 622368	
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541	
Anglican Church Tel. 625383, Tel. 628543	
Armenian Catholic Church, Tel. 771331	

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

It will be partly cloudy and a slight rise in temperatures is expected.

Min./max. temp.
Amman 4/15
Aqaba 14/24
Deserts 3/18
Jordan Valley 11/25

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 13, Aqaba 23. Humidity readings:

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

AMMAN: 85 per cent, Aqaba 31 per cent.	Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Dr. Khalil Al Jabali 740740	Shmeisani pharmacy 637660
Dr. Mufeed Tamous 854489	
Dr. Bassam Qaddoumi 646024	
Dr. Sami Khouri 681373	
Firas pharmacy 641812	
Ferdows pharmacy 778336	
Al Asena pharmacy 637055	
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Al Salam pharmacy 636730	

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Algerian parliament speaker ends visit

AMMAN (J.T.) — Speaker of Algeria's parliament, Abdul Aziz Belkadem, Sunday wound up a several day visit to Jordan during which he was received in audience by His Majesty King Hussein along with other members of the International Movement for Peace.

Belkadem, who arrived here with the speaker of the Yemeni parliament, also held talks with the speakers of the Upper and Lower Houses of Parliament and other government officials and parliamentarians on the Gulf question and other Arab affairs.

Belkadem, along with his counterparts from Yemen, Palestine, and Jordan, Friday issued a joint statement backing the Iraqi initiative of accepting U.N. Security Council resolution 660 with the aim of reestablishing peace and stability in the Gulf region.

The joint statement appealed to the parliaments of peace-loving nations to support the Iraqi initiative and put an end to the devastating war in the Gulf.

The joint appeal followed several meetings at the parliament house in Amman during which these parliamentarians and members of the Upper and Lower Houses of Parliament took part.

Atiqa outlines UNDP work in Jordan

AMMAN (J.T.) — Since the establishment of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in 1966 fruitful U.N.-Jordanian cooperation has been achieved, and more than 214 projects were either carried out or being implemented as a result, according to U.N. resident representative here, Ali Atiqa.

Atiqa was quoted by the Jordan News Agency, Petra, as saying that \$60.8 million have been spent on joint U.N.-Jordanian projects so far, mainly on human resources development and socio-economic schemes.

Atiqa said that the UNDP has been implementing 36 projects in health, agriculture, industry, science and technology, education, culture, manpower development and public services, some of which were still being carried out.

Atiqa's statement followed by UNDP annual report which said that through the implementation of 214 projects in more than 20 sectors of Jordan's economic and social development plans, UNDP has brought to Jordan the experience of more than 650 international professional experts, trained over 1100 Jordanian nationals abroad and provided about \$12 million worth of equipment installed in various sectors.

The report noted that major UNDP contributions were in strengthening the national indigenous capacity in national development planning and policy, human resources development like vocational education, training and basic sciences as well as forestry, rainfed areas, fisheries, livestock wealth, civil aviation, telecommunications, housing, energy and health.

The report said that Jordan's record in social and economic development over the last four decades has been outstanding. In spite of its scarce natural resources and a heavy burden of consequences of the Arab-Israeli conflict, Jordan was able to develop a social and economic structure with many strengths.

At present, Atiqa said in his statement to Petra, the UNDP was carrying out a project to help Jordan diversify its industrial exports by providing the essential expertise.

Dimona

(Continued from page 1)

No arrests were made and police have opened an investigation.

At a Jewish communal settlement in the occupied Gaza Strip, Eldad Nordan was seriously injured when he opened the door to a kibbutz's irrigation system control room setting off a homemade bomb, an army spokesman said.

Nordan, a 21-year-old conscript soldier, was on leave and was visiting the kibbutz which is south of Gaza City in the strip, Israel Radio said.

He was pronounced in moderate to serious condition after an operation.

UNESCO closes Amman office; U.N. officials say measure temporary

By Saeda Kilani
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Nearly 25 employees lost their jobs and around seven others had their income reduced to less than half following UNESCO's Paris headquarters decision to close down its office in Amman. However, U.N. officials in Amman say that the closure is temporary and that it does not mean that other U.N. organisations will follow suit.

Senior U.N. officials say they are in contact with the U.N. head office in New York to ensure that all U.N. experts who left the country recently would return to their work.

"UNESCO's regional office in Amman is basically involved in research and scientific projects which can be adjourned at the moment," Franke de Yonge, UNRWA's director in Amman told the Jordan Times. "UNICEF and UNRWA have actually increased their staff," he said. UNESCO, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, closed down its offices on Jan. 15 after receiving a telex order from Paris, employees said. Sources with very close links to the U.N. say that the absence

of an office director, at the time "have accelerated the process." The last office director, Mohammad Khatem retired only in December.

Most of UNESCO's UNEDBAS (U.N. Educational Bureau for Arab States) international staff, according to Jordanian employees, left on Jan. 10. The remaining staff, mostly Jordanians, received a memo on Jan. 15 announcing that the office closure was "temporary due to the current situation and until further notice."

All projects and development programmes were temporarily put to a halt. International staff remained who in Jordan told employees that those who left will for sure return within two weeks.

"They (UNESCO's remaining staff) have reassured us that everything will go back to normal in a short period of time," one employee said. "It was all done so quickly and suddenly that we did not have the time to find out what was really happening."

Some employees, who demanded not to be named, said that they were angry over the way their "dismissal" was announced giving them no chance to look out for other jobs.

"At the beginning, I waited for two weeks hoping that they will return," a one-year-old employee said. "At present, and after one month, I came to realise that time is running out and I have to look out for another job."

About 25 employees, with short-term contracts ranging from 3 to 6 months, have lost their jobs, some of them have worked for the office for more than three years. About seven others, seconded from the Ministry of Education, were returned to their previous jobs with their income reduced to less than half.

"It is not only that I am out of the job at the moment, but I also have nothing to prove that I have actually worked for UNESCO, or if I worked efficiently or not," said one employee. The move was so sudden, he says that it left him "no time" to ask for a recommendation.

U.N. officials in Amman maintain that the closure of UNESCO office does not mean that other U.N. offices will close their operations in Jordan.

"We are now more attached to our work and the responsibilities that were added on us due to the Gulf crisis," UNICEF's senior project officer Nuhad Kanawati said. "We

have already carried out many projects for the help of Iraqi children and we are more determined to complete our humanitarian mission, especially at this time and under these circumstances."

Dr. Ali Attiga, the U.N. resident representative in Jordan insists that the closing down of UNESCO office in Amman will in no way affect the work of other U.N. organisations. "I do not know the real circumstances that led to this situation, but they are not related in any way to other U.N. organisations," he said. "This is the time to help Jordan, for it has always been a faithful member of the United Nations."

Dr. Attiga announced Sunday that extensive contacts are going on at the moment with officials in the U.N. headquarters to make it possible for all foreign experts who have left Jordan earlier to return.

In a statement to the Jordan News Agency, Petra, Dr. Attiga said that the state of stability and tranquility in Jordan at present will encourage these experts to come back, affirming that their absence has not affected United Nations development programmes in the country.

Prince Hassan, Sommaruga discuss war impact on civilians, evacuees and Palestinian issue

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan Sunday discussed with president of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Cornelio Sommaruga, the impact of the Gulf war on civilian population and the need to find the best means to help civilians avoid the havoc of war.

Prince Hassan and Sommaruga stressed the need for protecting civilian areas and holy places from attacks by the warring parties.

They also reviewed the role of the Red Cross and Red Crescent societies in addressing the evacuees crisis in Jordan.

Commenting on the current

situation in the Gulf, Prince Hassan said human considerations should rise above political and any other considerations.

The Crown Prince also briefed the ICRC head on the situation of civilian population in the occupied Arab territories.

Sommaruga stressed the need for directing special attention to the people in the occupied territories, saying that they have been hard hit by the Gulf crisis and the blanket curfew imposed on them since the outbreak of war on Jan. 17.

Such factors have caused shortages of basic commodities and drugs and contributed to the deterioration of the living conditions of people there, he noted.

Her Royal Highness Princess Sarvath attended part of the meeting.

Princess Sarvath emphasised the need to focus attention on the effects and economic consequences of the Gulf war on Jordan and the impact on the Kingdom's economy of the international sanctions imposed on Iraq while considering the issue of Jordanian assistance and facilities for Gulf war evacuees.

The Princess thanked the various organisations which have extended assistance to Jordan in this context and expressed hope that they would continue to extend such support.

AOHR Jordan breaks silence Committee highlights damages to Iraqi archaeological sites, educational and cultural centres

By Odeh Odeh
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — World journalists were urged Sunday to join hands in the fight against systematic destruction of cultural centres and archaeological sites and other treasures of culture in Iraq committed by the allied war planes in the ongoing aggression on Iraq.

The appeal came at a press conference here during which a member of a national committee for the rescue of Iraqi heritage, Bader Abdul Haq, said that many cultural centres and archaeological treasures of Baghdad, Ninawa, Babylon, Najaf, Karbala and other cities and sites have been damaged by the continued bombing raids.

The civilisation of Mesopotamia, Abdul Haq said, was not the sole possession of Iraq, but rather of mankind as a whole and once the barbaric air attacks destroy these treasures they are lost for ever.

Abdul Haq, who is also vice-president of the Jordanian Writers Association (JWA) said that journalists and other intellectuals were called on to contribute towards an all-out effort to save the cultural heritage in Iraq.

Museums, libraries, archaeological sites along with places of worship like mosques and churches have been targeted by the allied bombers which seem to be intent on eradicating the traces of ancient civilisations that existed in Iraq for thousands of years, Abdul Haq noted.

Abdul Haq promised that the committee would shortly publish the names of all archaeological and cultural sites in Iraq which sustained minor or major damages due to the air raids.

Apart from cultural and archaeological centres, cities and villages, he said the allied forces have been bombing universities and other institutions of higher learning.

"The cultural and archaeological treasures found in Iraq as remnants of the Assyrian, Babylonian and Islamic civilisations are considered as treasures for mankind and it is the duty of the world community in general and the intellectuals among the world public in particular to take steps for the protection of these places," Abdul Haq added.

Meanwhile, the Jordan chapter of the Arab Organisation for Human Rights (AOHR) has issued a statement in Amman

expressing its total condemnation of the ongoing air raids on civilian targets describing them as outrageous massacres.

"These raids manifest a flagrant disregard on the part of the coalition arrayed against Iraq of all the international laws and principles and the Fourth Geneva Convention which provides for the protection of civilians during wars," said the organisation statement.

"AOHR wishes to draw attention of the world public opinion to the fact that the allied forces have far exceeded a mandate given them by the U.N. Security Council with their callous raids," the statement said.

AOHR, the statement added, considers the ongoing protests in various countries of the world, including the United States, against these barbaric actions as displaying the world's indignation and anger over the continuation of this devastating war.

The AOHR statement condemned the Egyptian government's stand with regard to this criminal war and denounced the Egyptian security authorities' harsh treatment of the Egyptian masses trying to express their denunciation of the war.

NATIONAL NEWS IN BRIEF

Prince Hassan visits army HQ

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan Sunday visited the army forces headquarters, where he met for a while with the Chief of Staff Gen. Fathi Abu Taleh and discussed with him a number of issues of interest to the Jordanian armed forces. Upon arrival at the headquarters, Prince Hassan was received by Gen. Abu Taleh, his assistants, the Royal Jordanian Airforce commander, and the inspector general.

Parliamentarians leave for Turkey today

AMMAN (Petra) — A joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation, headed by Palestine National Council (PNC) Speaker Abdul Hamid Al Sayeh leaves Monday for Pakistan and Turkey to hold talks with officials, parliamentarians and representatives of the various parties in the two countries on the developments of the Gulf war. The delegation will also explain the new Iraqi initiative and the provocative role played by Israel and Zionism to destroy Iraq, which has pledged to liberate Palestine. The team will describe the American hegemony over the region and will promote the redistribution of wealth fairly. The delegation comprises the Upper and Lower House of Parliament members Ishaq Al Farhan and Fuad Al Khalafat, as well as members of the PNC Abbas Zaki and Arafat Hijazi.

Arab medical teams go to Baghdad

AMMAN (Petra) — Two medical teams, including doctors from Mauritania and Palestine Sunday left for Baghdad, carrying with them quantities of medicine, medical supplies and baby milk, according to the Arab Doctors Union Secretary-General Hassan Khreis, who is also Chairman of the Arab Health Committee for supporting Iraq. Khreis said that the committee has received 20 tonnes of medicine and medical supplies from Tunisia and will receive similar quantities from Algeria, Tunisia and Yemen.

Education body denounces massacres in Iraq

AMMAN (Petra) — The National Association for the Education of the Children Sunday denounced the ugly massacre of Iraqi children and other civilians, carried out by the U.S.-led coalition against Iraq. The association condemned the inhuman American and Western practices against the civilian population, and contested the credibility of their allegations of protecting human rights and their violation of the international convention on human rights as well as the other international covenants and conventions on human rights.

Iraqi weapon fetches JD 13,000 in auction

AMMAN (Petra) — An Iraqi Kalashnikov was sold Saturday for JD 13,000 at an auction held at the Automobile Exhibition. The public auction was a part of a fund-raising function sponsored by a number of restaurants and patisserie shops, in cooperation with the Arab Health Committee for supporting Iraq. The function included a dinner, proceeds from which will go towards buying medicine and food for the children of Iraq.

Commerce committee reviews activities

AMMAN (Petra) — The Jordanian National Committee of the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) stressed the important role Jordan has played in the world economy through its active participation in a number of international trade conferences. The committee called for putting an end to the irregular practices and the unnecessary harassment of ships heading to Aqaba port. The committee said that the general assembly of the ICC would meet in Amman on Feb. 28 to discuss a report prepared by the committee on Jordan's needs and its contribution to the world economy. It also said the assembly would recommend to the ICC that Jordan be exempted from paying its annual subscription in view of the hard economic circumstances the country is passing through.

House panel amends financial laws

AMMAN (Petra) — The Lower House's Financial Committee Sunday discussed a number of provisional laws relating to Central Bank work. After discussing these laws, the committee approved them having made some amendments. The meeting, which was chaired by Abdullah Al Nsour, was attended by the Central Bank of Jordan Governor Mohammad Said Al Nabulsi. The House's Independent Bloc also held a meeting Sunday and elected Deputy Abdul Salam Freihat as rapporteur of the bloc, in succession to Dr. Mohammad Al Alawneh, who was appointed Minister of Agriculture. The bloc also selected deputies Aref Al Butoush and Mahmoud Al Huweimal as a drafting and information committee.

Amman, Tehran move to reopen embassies soon

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Iranian and Jordanian diplomats are expected in each other's capitals soon to reopen their diplomatic missions following the resumption of formal relations last month after a 10-year break, diplomatic sources said Sunday.

Mohammad Ali Daher, the Jordanian charge d'affaires, who was the last diplomat of the Kingdom to leave Tehran in 1981, is scheduled to leave for the Iranian capital this week to resume his post, a senior official said.

"It is only a matter of procedures," the official told the Jordan Times. Mr. Daher will proceed to Tehran and locate suitable buildings for the Jordanian mission and pave the way for the formal reopening of the embassy, he said.

that our foreign minister, (Taher Al Masri), received a most cordial and warm welcome when he visited Iran last month," he said.

"We have not been formally notified of any scheduled visit by Mr. Velayati to Amman," he added.

Earlier, other sources had indicated that Mr. Velayati might visit Amman on his way home from Bonn, where, he is due Monday.

Diplomatic relations between Jordan and Iran were severed in January 1981 in the wake of the Kingdom's strong support for Iraq in the Iran-Iraq war, which broke out in September 1980. Pakistan has been looking after Jordanian interests in Tehran and Iranian interests in Amman since then.

Nara Ghian, Mr. Daher's counterpart, is expected in Amman this week, according to a diplomatic source. Mr. Ghian last served as charge d'affaires at the Iranian mission in Bahrain, the source said.

A diplomat from the Islamic republic's embassy in Damascus visited Amman over the weekend to inspect the premises of the Iranian mission here, the source said.

The building located between the Third and Fourth Circles, is owned by the Iranian government, while the Jordanian mission in Tehran was housed in a rented premises.

The Jordanian official said the Foreign Ministry had not named its ambassador to Iran yet; nor has Tehran designated its senior-most diplomat in Amman.

The official said there was no definite information yet on an expected visit to Amman by Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati.

"Mr. Velayati has an open invitation from Jordan which he has accepted," the official said. "Diplomatic exchanges need not be a hindrance, in view of the fact

With the end of the Iran-Iraq war with a ceasefire in August 1988, diplomatic contacts were revived, and formal relations were resumed with the signing of a protocol at the U.N. by the chief Jordanian and Iranian delegates to the world body in mid-January 1991.

Relations have warmed up also between the Jordanian and Iranian parliaments and several Jordanian delegations have visited Tehran. A group of Iranian parliamentarians visited Amman last week and a joint statement issued by the two legislative bodies indicated a large area of agreement between them, particularly in the context of the Gulf situation.

Trade between the two countries have also picked up. The first shipment of Jordanian phosphates to Iran, exported under a \$66 million supply contract, is expected to leave Jordan by the end of the month.

Senior officials have said that Jordan was considering oil imports from Iran to make up for the shortfalls in the flow from Iraq resulting from allied air attacks on Iraqi facilities as well as Jordanian oil tankers carrying Iraqi crude to the Kingdom.

JNRCS, ICRC heads review joint aid efforts

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Jordan National Red Crescent Society (JNRCS) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) Sunday reviewed joint efforts in humanitarian affairs in general and means of providing the Iraqi people with humanitarian assistance during the Gulf war in particular.

The heads of JNRCS and ICRC, Dr. Ahmad Abu Qoura and Cornelio Sommaruga, both expressed readiness to extend relief supplies to the Iraqi people during a meeting they held in Amman on the second day of Sommaruga's visit here to discuss ways to boost humanitarian efforts throughout the Gulf war.

Cooperation between JNRCS and the ICRC on the one hand and their efforts made in conjunction with other international relief agencies on the other to

provide assistance for the war victims were discussed at the meeting Sunday, according to Dr. Abu Qoura.

The focus of attention was on providing Iraq with medicine, essential food and medical equipment under the present conditions facing the Iraqi people and also after the war, said Abu Qoura in his statement to the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

Abu Qoura said that JNRCS was ready to continue dispatching shipments of medical supplies to Iraq and will continue contacts with the Iraqi National Red Crescent Society to coordinate efforts.

During the meeting, Abu Qoura and Sommaruga discussed the agenda of the 26th international conference by world Red Cross and Red Crescent societies which will be held in November in Hungary.

UNDRO Amman chief says U.N. may compensate families of air raid victims

AMMAN (J.T.) — The United Nations office operating in Jordan will give serious consideration to any request from the Jordanian government to compensate for the Jordanian families who lost their sons as a result of allied bombing raids on the Jordanian civilian vehicles on the Amman-Baghdad route, a senior U.N. officer said in Amman Sunday.

war, and noted that the United Nations charter provides for protection to the civilian population and consider their deliberate killing as an international unlawful act.

At least 14 truck drivers were among those killed in the raid on the highway and 31 trucks were reported to have been destroyed in the raids.

for 100,000 of these evacuees. These supplies, stored in warehouses in Jordan can be used at any time for the benefit of the evacuees converging on the camps set up at Azraq, Amman and Aqaba, Einhaus noted.

He said that United Nations agencies was taking care of the evacuees in cooperation with the local authorities until the arrangements could be made for their repatriation, mainly through Royal Jordanian (RJ) chartered planes.

The United Nations sympathies with the bereaved families who have suffered as a result of these raids during their travel in civilian cars to Jordan, escaping the fighting zones in Iraq and Kuwait, according to the director of the Amman office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Organisation (UNDRO), Mr. Hans Einhaus.

He was quoted by the Jordan news agency, Petra, as saying that compensation for the victims of the war was not the United Nations responsibility but UNDRO was willing to study any request submitted by the Jordanian government in this respect.

Einhaus expressed his regret and sadness over the death of the innocent civilians during the Gulf

As a result of the shortage of crude oil the government three weeks ago introduced measures to reduce oil consumption in Jordan allowing private cars to run on alternate days only.

The government also sought a deal with Syria to buy crude oil and bought an oil tanker for \$7.5 million to be stationed in Aqaba to provide supplies of crude oil to the Kingdom.

Einhaus tanded the government's cooperation in matters related to providing facilities to the United Nations officers operating in the country and providing relief and humanitarian assistance to the evacuees.

The United Nations agencies have made arrangements for sufficient stocks of food supplies lasting for at least three months

More than 800,000 evacuees of different nationalities have passed through Jordan on their way home since the start of the Gulf crisis last August and the United Nations agencies like UNDRO and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) have been closely cooperating with the Jordanian government in putting them up in camps prior to their repatriation.

Protests against U.S. continue

AMMAN (Petra) — A march was organised Sunday by the Jordanian Arab Nationalist Democratic Alliance (JANDA) and the National Federation of Jordanian Youth to protest the aggression on Iraq by the U.S.-led alliance.

Several Lower House of Parliament members and representatives of local societies and committees took part in the march which proceeded from Al Abdali bus station to the United Nations office in Shmeisani.

Participants in the march submitted to the U.N. office a communique issued by the Arab Pub-

lic Conference for Confronting the Aggression on Iraq and the Arab Nation which concluded its meetings in Sanaa, Yemen, recently.

Retired army Lieutenant General Mashhour Al Jazi read the text of the communique before the public in front of the U.N. office.

The conference in Sanaa decided to call on Arab citizens for public mobilisation to confront the aggression, consider the 17th of each month a day of solidarity with Iraq, collect donations for Iraq and call on Arab profession-

al unions and committees to step up their efforts in the process of seconding medical delegation and sending supplies to Iraq.

The communique also called for establishing an Arab fund for supporting Iraq's steadfastness.

Deputy Mansour Seifeddine Murad delivered an address in which he stressed the need to counter the U.S.-Atlantic aggression on Iraq.

He said the aggression was aimed at destroying the Arab Nation in general, and ending the Palestinian uprising in the occupied territories in particular.

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Iraq won't surrender

THE KIND of unconditional and complete withdrawal that the allied countries are demanding of Iraq is tantamount to surrender. Iraq has not surrendered and has no intention of doing so. All that Baghdad has now proposed is to give U.N. Security Council Resolution 660 a chance for practical implementation by observing its spirit as well as its letter. True that resolution calls for immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Iraqi troops from Kuwait. But it is also true that its third operative paragraph calls for an immediate, intensive negotiations between Iraq and Kuwait for the purpose of resolving their differences. If this operative paragraph is not a built-in condition for the full implementation of that resolution, one does not know what is. Additionally, any legal and political document as the one that found expression in Resolution 660 needs to be seen in proper perspective and with a sense of realism. One cannot for example have half a million Iraqi troops moved from Kuwait "immediately" in the strict sense of the word. Moving such a massive number of Iraqi soldiers out of Kuwait would necessarily require reasonable time and practical security arrangements. Otherwise Iraq would put its armed forces at the mercy of its enemies, numerous as they are and harbouring sinister motives and intentions as they do. The Iraqi ambassador to the U.N., Abdul Amir Anbari, emphasised on Saturday in New York that the so-called Iraqi "conditions" associated with Baghdad's Friday stunning announcement that it accepts Resolution 660 are not actually "conditions" but rather "issues" that need to be discussed. This is the catch here. The government of Iraq is assuring the world especially the part of it that is willing to listen that there are really no conditions attached to Iraq's peace overture. Yet U.S. President George Bush and his inner circle of advisers who have developed a vested interest in pursuing the war option insist on seeing the thorns instead of smelling the flower. It is one thing for such officials to characterise Baghdad's acceptance of Resolution 660 as incomplete and quite another to label it as a "cruel hoax" and to add insult to injury by calling on the Iraqi people to topple their president and his government.

We hope there is still some sanity left in this world to enable Soviet leaders to build on Iraq's peace initiative, which they saw as a promising step in the peace campaign. If Moscow and Baghdad can establish a true momentum for peace there the warmongers would be stripped of any excuse to prosecute their lust for war and destruction. As things stand now, it appears as if the leaders of the Coalition Against Iraq (CAI) are hell bent on pressing with their war on the ground, regardless of what happens in Moscow. If this is indeed the case, there is only one thing left to be said: Iraq will defend itself and prove capable of repelling the aggression.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

WITH THE Iraqi announcement that Baghdad is ready to implement U.N. Security Council resolution 660, no excuse is left for the allied forces to maintain their air bombardment of Iraqi civilian targets, said Al Ra'i Arabic daily Sunday. Indeed, the Iraqi initiative provides very positive ideas for the West and essential elements for resolving not only the Gulf crisis, but also the Middle East Arab-Israeli conflict, the paper noted. Once the negotiations for peace are opened, all issues could be discussed for all formulas that would bring about the aspired peace and security for the Middle East, the paper added. But the paper said the American rejection of the Iraqi initiative stands out as a major obstacle for the U.N. Security Council to meet again and decide on the issue despite the fact that the continuation of the war is no more feasible now than the Iraqis have accepted resolution 660. Furthermore, President Bush has no right to decide to carry on the war since it is the right of the Security Council, which in the first place ruled in favour of war, to decide whether the hostilities should continue or not, said the paper. Neither Washington nor any other Western capital has the right to decide on matters of peace or war simply because the United Nations organisation is the sole party empowered to take such practice, the paper added. The time has come for the peace loving nations and organisations to intervene and seize the opportunity to end the conflict, the paper said. It said that peace, that would end the suffering of many people, should not be left in the hands of one person or a handful of persons because it benefits mankind.

We did not expect from Israel or its Western allies in general and the United States in particular to accept the Iraqi initiative because it means peace based on justice which they have adamantly refused so far, said Al Dustour Arabic daily Sunday. The paper said that the allied forces came to the Gulf not to liberate Kuwait as they claimed but to destroy Iraq's military might and economic and scientific infrastructure. Israel in particular is expected to encourage the United States to pursue its efforts to destroy Iraq in order to safeguard its own selfish interests and maintain its hold over Arab lands, the paper noted. What is surprising about the situation ensuing the Iraqi initiative, is to see Arab countries siding with Israel and the United States by expressing their rejection of the Iraqi initiative which not only expressed desire to withdraw Iraqi forces from Kuwait, but is also designed to safeguard Arab countries' rights and those of the Palestinian people in the Palestinian lands, the paper pointed out. It said that it is unimaginable that Arab countries could adopt such a negative stand in a matter considered in favour of their own interests and siding by their enemies against their Arab brothers in Iraq instead. The paper said that the allied forces are competing with one another to kill Arab women and children in Iraq at a time when certain Arab countries aligned behind Washington continue to gloat over the suffering of their Arab brothers and sisters.

Weekly Political Pulse

The facts are missing from the Gulf war of information

IN retrospect, the entire Gulf crisis began with a massive barrage of disinformation. Starting with the collapse of the Jeddah meeting (held between the Iraqi and Kuwaiti sides under the direction of King Fahd on the eve of the Kuwaiti crisis) and the ensuing Arab efforts to defuse the collapsed Kuwaiti-Iraqi negotiations in the wake of Iraq's invasion of Kuwait on Aug. 2, the whole scenario seems with the benefit of hindsight, to have been nothing but a vicious and well calculated campaign to frustrate all efforts for a peaceful resolution of the conflict and head instead directly to war.

Even if one wants to give credit to the other side's interpretation of the events that preceded Iraq's occupation of Kuwait and the circumstances that followed it, there is still a body of facts that stand out openly and clearly in support of the thesis that a premeditated disinformation campaign has been waged all along by Washington and its allies in their effort to achieve the principal objectives in the Gulf region: One to destroy Iraq as a regional power, and the second to place the oil wealth of the Gulf region under the direct hegemony of Washington and London. The other parties that "wily-ally" joined the contemporary "Sikes-Picot" design for the Middle East and Gulf region apparently did so to get a piece of the pie.

Even Moscow was caught by surprise and thought for a while that it too must toe Washington's line and either play the part designated for it or risk being kept out of the grand scheme and the spoils of war. There are now signs that the Soviet Union has finally woken up to the harsh realities of the game and is beginning to show signs of restlessness and unease. That there will be a belated

backlash in the Soviet Union is a foregone conclusion, but it will take time for Moscow to regroup and articulate a tenable reaction. Time, of course, is not on the side of Moscow which is bedevilled with a string of domestic woes most of which Moscow now believes are of Washington's making.

To get back to the disinformation campaign that was waged in particular by Washington right from the word go, it is fitting to recall the assurances and pledge by U.S. President George Bush that the U.S. deployment of forces in Saudi Arabia is simply and purely for the defence of Saudi Arabia with no designs or plans to start offensive hostilities. This part is most troubling for all peoples and nations of the world who still look to the U.S. as the only remaining superpower with political, economic, and military clout to establish a new international order on the heels of the end the East-West rivalry.

For the U.S. president to make such a declaration for the whole world to hear and take a note of, only to be found as untrue, is simply preposterous. The strength and influence of Washington cannot be maintained on falsehoods, disinformation and deceit.

When the American chief executive makes a pledge or a commitment, the international community is entitled to place its trust and faith in any such declaration of policy. It is already an established history that President Bush never meant what he told his people and the nations of the world when he said that the U.S. deployment of armed forces was simply to defend Riyadh. The first sign that President Bush was not telling the whole truth and nothing but the truth came when he announced few weeks later

that he was beefing up the U.S. military presence in order to give them offensive capability.

Washington did not stop there but rather called on its allies as well to augment their military presence in order to also join the offensive effort of the so-called coalition forces.

The massive disinformation campaign continued after the start of the war in the Gulf. The extensive aerial and missile bombardment of Iraq was not confined as "pledged" to military targets, but also reached civilian targets — be they Iraqi, Kuwaiti or Jordanian.

The biggest tragedy of all is that the immediate audience of President Bush, the American people, are not being told the facts about the entire Gulf conflict from its inception to its present state of affairs. Of course the only hope to amend Bush's policy on the Kuwait situation is to have the American people bear the whole truth. As long as they are denied an opportunity to get familiar with even the basics about the crisis there, will be no chance whatsoever that they will ever tell their government enough is enough.

Bush's era can thus be characterised as an era unprecedented in censorship of news and manipulation of information. Perhaps the president's background as the director of the CIA would explain in part his tendency to direct the news media in a way that serves best his line of policy. Meanwhile, the American people get the blame for the present course in Washington, and the entire country gets chastised for the wrong-doing of the few who happen to be at the helm now in Washington.

'Death by briefing' of the media in Saudi Arabia

By George Esper
The Associated Press

DHAHRAN — After a month of war, with ground combat approaching, the U.S. military has severely curtailed access by reporters to soldiers and the front lines.

As a sideshow, there is the endless skirmish between military public relations officers and more than 800 journalists who seek front-row seats at the United States' largest battle since Vietnam.

"Death by briefing," said a frustrated reporter who had been exhausted, not by a trip into the field, but by the marathon of note-taking and tape recording at sessions with official spokesmen.

The command says it will increase access to the troops. All journalists would be in escorted pools, however, and would total fewer than half the 500 reporters and photographers who roamed Vietnam almost unrestricted.

Military officials argue that the movements of journalists must be limited to protect them as well as the allied war effort.

Some existing pools have not been activated and no journalist is allowed to interview a GI without a military escort. Some soldiers who spoke with unaccompanied reporters have been reprimanded.

manded.

Like Vietnam, the number of U.S. military personnel in the Gulf has grown to more than half a million. Unlike Vietnam, access in the first month has been limited to slightly more than 100 journalists in pools. All pool reports are subject to military censorship.

Some air force pools have fared relatively well, including one that covered the opening night of the war. After that, pool coverage went downhill and journalists were not taken to the only major ground fighting thus far, at Khafji on Jan. 27.

The U.S. command said no marines were engaged in the battle, but they were, as was discovered by reporters who made their own ways to Khafji at great risk.

Some, including Fred Bayles and John Klog of the Associated Press, were detained for their efforts. Their names were given to the Saudi government, along with those of other correspondents who went into the field without military escorts.

If journalists had their way, there would be no pools that inhibit individual reporting.

"It's just completely diffe-

rent," said R.W. Apple of the New York Times, who covered Vietnam in the 1960s. "It seems to me, having disliked the way the war was covered in Vietnam, the American military decided to try to shape the coverage of this war to its liking."

In the view of some military officials and the U.S. Defence Department, the press somehow lost the war in Vietnam by portraying its horrors in pictures and words, thus undermining public support.

"The American military got this image of the press as an uncontrolled enemy," said Tooy Clifton, a Newsweek correspondent who has covered wars for 20 years.

After Vietnam came the Falklands, Grenada and Panama, where reporters were held in pools that never really got to the action.

"The Americans, among others, saw that the press could be controlled completely if the army had complete control over the movements and the communications of the press," Clifton said.

For the first three weeks of the Gulf war, for example, not one New York Times reporter was

authorised to be with U.S. ground troops.

"Mountainous roadblocks have been put in the way of effective coverage," Apple said.

Frustrated reporters and photographers have gone out on their own, unescorted. A dozen have been detained by military authorities, even blindfolded and held at gunpoint, and four CBS news staffers disappeared Jan. 21 near the border.

The U.S. command portrays the war as one with few casualties and brings on its top brass with charts and such euphemisms as "collateral damage," for bombs that stray from military targets.

It has gone to such extremes that some reporters have been kept out of military hospitals. Yet, the Washington Post was able to interview a wounded American by telephone.

Polls indicate public support for the military's information policy. Many people seem to be convinced that military's only aim is to protect American lives.

"Army prestige had never been higher, because this is seen as a just war and we're not taking any casualties, so the army must be right," Clifton said.

Aziz's Moscow visit shapes up as last chance to avert ground war

By Nicholas Phythian
Reuters

NICOSIA — Iraq's foreign minister, Tariq Aziz, was expected in Moscow Sunday for a visit that looks more and more like a last chance to avert a bloody ground battle for Kuwait.

Mr. Aziz, whose country spoke for the first time of withdrawal on Friday in a ceasefire proposal hedged with conditions, will have talks with Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev who is at the forefront of efforts to end the month-old conflict peacefully.

But U.S. President George Bush, whose planes are spearheading an unrelenting aerial bombardment of Iraqi forces, said he had received "very fresh" assurances from Moscow that Mr. Gorbachev remained firmly behind international efforts to end Iraq's occupation of Kuwait.

"He's been very solid in support of the coalition," Mr. Bush told reporters while on a seaside walk in freezing temperatures near his holiday home at Kennebunkport in Maine.

White House sources said Mr. Bush, who rejected the Iraqi ceasefire proposal as a "cruel hoax," had received a letter from Mr. Gorbachev seeking a delay in the start of any ground offensive until after he meets Mr. Aziz Monday.

In Moscow, European Community (EC) ministers said Mr. Gorbachev would demand Iraq's withdrawal from Kuwait in his talks with Mr. Aziz.

"In his meeting with Tariq Aziz, he is going to insist on this point," Luxembourg Foreign Minister Jacques Poos said after talks with the Soviet leader

Saturday. "In times of war, one can always hope that pressure put on one of the parties may lead to a peaceful solution."

The Soviet Union, like Iran, has been trying to persuade Iraq to withdraw peacefully.

Moscow welcomed Iraq's ceasefire initiative as "an important beginning" and has made much of the fact that the Iraqi ruling Revolutionary Command Council (RCC) spoke of withdrawal from Kuwait.

"But Soviet spokesmen have expressed reservations about the conditions, which include an Israeli withdrawal from occupied Arab territories."

"Unfortunately, this principled provision (withdrawal) is linked to many conditions, which could render it meaningless," Foreign Ministry spokesman Vitaly Churkin said.

Iraq's U.N. ambassador called Saturday for negotiations on the basis of Baghdad's offer and said some members of the coalition opposed to the occupation of Kuwait were "more sincere than the others in trying to find a peaceful solution."

"For example, the Soviet Union is more interested in genuinely trying to find a peaceful solution," he added.

Iran, which fought Iraq from 1980 to 1988 but has remained neutral in the latest Gulf war Saturday urged the United States and its allies to react positively to Baghdad's offer.

The Supreme National Security Council, chaired by President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani,

urged them "to take reciprocal positive steps and thus prepare the ground for a peaceful and rapid settlement of the hostilities."

But U.S. Defence Secretary Dick Cheney, while welcoming the Soviet diplomatic move, said there could be no ceasefire without an Iraqi withdrawal.

"If they (the Soviet Union) can persuade Saddam Hussein to comply with the U.N. resolutions and get out of Kuwait by reiterating once again that that is the only acceptable outcome that obviously would be a service," he said.

"But I don't think there's any room here for any pause, any ceasefire — anything other than complete, total, unconditional compliance with the U.N. resolutions," he said.

U.S. military chiefs, meanwhile, said they could not guarantee Mr. Aziz safe passage if he left by air for Moscow.

The representative of the nation that started this war and ravaged Kuwait is entering a dangerous situation when he attempts to leave the country," said Lieutenant General Tom Kelly, the Pentagon's operations director.

The 700,000-strong U.S.-led multinational force is poised to launch a ground offensive against the estimated 500,000 Iraqi troops in and around Kuwait.

The aerial bombardment, designed to soften up Iraqi defences and keep allied casualties to a minimum, continued with fresh attacks on the elite Republican Guard and other targets.

Military sources in London said the Iraqi army may have lost up to 40 per cent of its armour and artillery, approaching the 50 per cent threshold they say is

needed before any ground offensive.

But Iraq accuses allied plans of attacking civilians.

It says in one incident on Wednesday more than 500 people were killed in an air strike on a Baghdad shelter. In another, it said 130 civilians were killed when bombs missed a bridge during a raid on Falluja, west of the capital.

The U.S. Defence Department, which claims the shelter was a military communications centre, accused Iraq of deliberately damaging at least one building for "propaganda" purposes but declined to produce any immediate evidence.

"They are faking some of it," Rear Admiral Mike McConnell told a news briefing. "We saw them inflict some damage on a specific building."

Two Iraqi Scud missiles hit Israel Saturday night and the army said one landed in the south for the first time. An army spokesman said there were no reports of casualties or damage.

Morocco, which sent troops to the Gulf to defend Saudi Arabia but has seen widespread popular support for Iraq at home, became the first member of the allied coalition to welcome Iraq's ceasefire offer.

But the eight other Arab members of the coalition, meeting in Cairo, omitted any mention of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) from a statement on the future of the Middle East.

The statement, marking a possible shift in approach to the Arab-Israeli conflict, appeared to reflect deep anger over PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat's outspoken support for Iraq.



The world of big tips

By Peter Ustinov

The following are major excerpts from a column the author contributed to the Feb. 15-17 issue of the European. Mr. Ustinov is a prominent actor, TV personality and UNICEF ambassador at large.

I NEVER thought I would live to hear U.S. Secretary of State James Baker say that King Hussein of Jordan had changed sides. To make such an allegation is not to know the King, a privilege I have had for the best part of half a century. I was much less surprised to hear that the generous American grant to Jordan was being reconsidered as a punishment for a speech which seemed intemperate, less surprised, because we live in the world the big tipper, with sudden withdrawal of favour regularly used to censure the expression of unpopular opinion.

Remember, if you will, the declaration of the Yemeni chairman of the Security Council, who dared to cast his vote against the motion condemning Iraq for the invasion of Kuwait. He said that his vote was a question of conscience, admitting that his gesture would no doubt mean the withdrawal of \$70 million in American aid. The Egyptian debt for military hardware from the United States was wiped out as a gesture of gratitude for Egypt's willingness to be actively involved in the Gulf war. We can only guess at the deals with Syria and other countries, notably Israel, along the same lines.

Once governments behave in a manner which would entail instant arrest in individuals, and once the graceful term of enlightened self-interest is employed to justify the atmosphere of understated venality prevalent today, it strains credulity to accept President Bush's definition of the present conflict as one of good versus evil. That is strictly for the young of mind. Mark you, nothing that Mr. Bush can say can make Saddam Hussein's image less attractive than it already is, although it is absolutely possible that such a man may exert a certain charm on those who actually know him.

To allege that good is the exclusive platform of the coalition is, far-fetched and even in doubtful taste. The massive and constant air attacks on military targets obviously make a great deal of strategic sense, even if they sicken the sensibilities of those who remember Dresden, and even London during the Blitz. And the promise to reconstruct Iraq when it is all over is but a premonition of guilty conscience in those about to indulge in slaughter.

Mr De Klerk, in his historic speech to the South African parliament, equated the end of apartheid with the end of sanctions. This can only mean that sanctions had hurt South Africa, an item worthy of record. At the same time, the sanctions against South Africa were not for a moment as watertight as those against Iraq.

Adjoining countries depending on trade with South Africa were spared from joining in, a form of fundamental understanding never extended to Jordan.

Who can ever know whether the sanctions against Iraq might have done the trick, and rendered the whole massive scenario redundant? No one. All we know is that weapons work a treat, and I suppose that is some kind of relief. And what will happen when the scenario, eagerly written by so many contributors, and controlled by so few, is finally at an end?

The great peace conference, the return of goodwill and golden handshakes for the deserving, the Palestinians represented the delegates of our choice. This is tantamount to Britain, during the American War of Independence, deciding to negotiate with the colonists on condition that their delegate was Benedict Arnold.

The conflict may really only begin at the peace conference, even though the war is behind us. But meanwhile, let us applaud Jordan, as though it were her responsibility.

And let us wonder why the United States should have allowed her pique with the most liberal spirit in the region, who is merely democratically the opinion of his subjects, to cloud her magnanimity.

China tries to put Tiananmen behind it, but success difficult

By David Schlessinger
Reuters

BEIJING — China's leaders are trying to put the pro-democracy demonstrations of 1989 behind them by jailing two alleged masterminds — called "black hands" — for 13 years, bringing to an end trials of well-known dissidents.

However, diplomats in Beijing said the traditional Chinese practice of punishing scapegoats to quell unrest, summed up in proverbial like "kill a chicken to warn the monkey," and "execute one to scare 100," may not work for long.

"There is still so much anger and hurt below the surface, and the dissatisfaction about Communist Party rule that resulted in Tiananmen (square demonstrations) is still there," a senior diplomat said.

"The millions of people who took to the streets did so naturally and spontaneously. To try to put the blame on two people is ludicrous."

Beijing's people's intermediate court last week jailed Chen Ziming and Wang Jintao for 13 years on charges of inciting to subvert the government and the socialist system.

An internal speech by Premier Li Peng labelled Wang, 32, and Chen 37, "the black hands behind the black hands" plotting the pro-democracy movement, according to Chinese sources and the human rights group Asia Watch.

The speech, which has not been published in the official press, reportedly said the two veteran pro-democracy campaigners had to be crushed or the communist government would know no peace.

NEWS ANALYSIS

A third dissident, Lin Gang, was sentenced to six years. Chen Xiaoping, a 29-year-old constitutional law scholar, was found guilty but was exempted from punishment because he surrendered voluntarily to authorities and showed repentance.

Including last week's announcement, 21 guilty verdicts on dissidents involved in the 1989 unrest have been reported in the official media, resulting in 15 prison sentences.

Diplomats said they did not expect further trials of prominent

dissidents arrested in the crackdown on dissent that began on June 4, 1989, when army tanks and guns crushed the pro-democracy movement and inflicted a heavy loss of life.

In Washington, U.S. State Department spokeswoman Margaret Tutwiler said the sentences were deeply troubling.

"No prison sentence imposed for nonviolent political activity can be considered lenient," she told reporters.

Diplomats in Beijing said they thought the 1989 democracy movement and the harsh and bloody government repression that followed would not be forgotten either by the world community or by the Chinese population.

"These were clearly political trials and these people are political prisoners," a diplomat said.

The Chinese government has said repeatedly the trials were legal and carried out according to established procedures. It has rejected attempts by Western reporters and diplomats to attend, saying the proceedings were purely an internal affair.

"The world will not forget it and the people will not forget it. The Chinese people remember

massacres very vividly and with great anger," the diplomat said.

"The communist leadership knows that, because it came to power on the back of just that kind of anger. At some point down the road, when conditions are right, that anger will spill over again and either sweep the present leadership away or cause absolutely massive reform," he said.

Most diplomats agreed that economic stability was now key to the present leadership remaining in power, and that mass demonstrations were unlikely soon unless growth slowed and inflation soared again.

The 1989 demonstration were preceded by a bout of inflation that hit 30 per cent in cities. Inflation was brought down to two per cent last year.

Diplomats pointed out that harsh sentences on previous dissidents, like the 15-year sentence handed Wei Jingsheng in 1979, had not crushed the pro-democracy spirit, however.

"They are trying to put Tiananmen behind them, but giving 13 years does not do that," a diplomat said.

"What they have done is just put it ahead of them."

Turkish plan to ease Kurdish ban faces stiff opposition

by Ayse Sarioglu
Reuters

ANKARA — A Turkish government plan to let an estimated 10 million Kurds speak their mother tongue without breaking the law has run into stiff opposition.

The reform, seen by western diplomats as an attempt to polish up Turkey's human rights image, has antagonised many nationalist Turks.

They fear that lifting the ban, imposed in 1983 to help curb political violence, will fuel Kurdish aspirations for autonomy or independence.

Parliamentary sources say that the ruling centre-right Motherland Party, despite its absolute parliamentary majority, may fail to push the reform through the assembly quickly, partly because of resistance within its own ranks.

"We must tread very carefully. People in other regions fear this move could lead to separatism," Motherland Deputy Chairman Metin Gurdere told Reuters.

A draft bill, sent to parliament last month by the government, proposes allowing the Kurds, concentrated in 13 southeastern provinces, to speak — but not write — their language.

So sensitive is the issue that the draft bill, even though it would merely legalise current practice, does not even mention the word Kurdish.

It asserts that Turkish is the country's sole official language, but says other languages and dialects may be used in speech and music.

"I can say there is quite a large number of opponents (in the Motherland) to the Kurdish bill," said Motherland Deputy Alpaskan Pehlivanli, who heads the commission.

"The agenda of parliament's judiciary commission is full. The debate on this bill may be delayed for weeks."

The outlawed Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) has led a violent independence campaign which has cost more than 2,600 lives in the southeast since 1984.

The PKK, which has attracted minimal world attention with its campaign, says the region is part of an ancient Kurdish homeland covering parts of present-day Iran, Iraq and Syria.

Turkey, which borders all three countries, has sworn to prevent the emergence of any independent Kurdish state in northern Iraq after the Gulf war.

Western diplomats say President Turgut Ozal wants the language reform now to polish Turkey's image and improve its influence on any post-war changes to the status of Kurds in Iraq.

The government has, at the same time, said it would cancel three penal code articles which ban political action by communists and Muslim fundamentalists.

Turkey's human rights record has often come under fire from the West.

Its treatment of the Kurds, reports of police torture and repression aspects of its penal code have been cited as obstacles to its bid for full European Community membership.

Turkey has signed several human rights conventions, including those at the 1990 Paris Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, which lay down stringent international standards.

Kurds in Turkey are not recognised as an ethnic minority, unlike Greeks and Armenians, who have their own schools, churches and newspapers in their own languages.

Strict anti-separatist laws punish any attempt to assert an ethnic or national Kurdish identity. Motherland Deputy Nurettin

Yilmaz, a Kurd, infuriated his conservative colleagues last week by saying Kurds were settled in Anatolia before Turks arrived in the 11th century.

State Minister Mustafa Tasar said Mr. Yilmaz had fuelled antagonism to the Kurdish reform among Motherland deputies.

"I support the bill, but it is wrong for Kurds to say 'we are different' when we are talking of equality for all citizens. Separatism will harm its supporters," he said.

The Kurdish ban was enacted in 1983 by a military government which took power in a 1980 coup to curb political violence.

The reform will enable Kurds to speak Kurdish and listen to Kurdish music but the language will remain banned from official documents, education, publications, the media and rallies.

"The bill will be passed finally but it will be difficult," said Motherland Deputy Resit Celik, a Kurd.

Ugur Mumcu, a columnist for the left-leaning Cumhuriyet daily, took a more cynical view.

"It will serve no purpose except make money for Kurdish singers whose cassettes will sell like hot cakes."

East knocks at NATO door — but will it open?

by Nicholas Doughty
Reuters

BRUSSELS — The nations of Eastern Europe, once NATO's sworn enemies, are pressing the Western alliance to shelter them from the threat of unrest and their increasingly troubled Soviet neighbour.

Their old organisations for military and trade affairs — the Warsaw Pact and Comecon — are dead and about to be buried.

NATO, while keen to forge new links with the fragile young democracies in Poland, Hungary or Czechoslovakia, has shut the door firmly on admitting new members and is deeply ambiguous about what else it might do to help those now out in the cold.

"This is one of the most sensitive subjects that we have to deal with," a senior NATO official said recently.

"They see us as a force for stability in Europe, perhaps the only one," said an alliance diplomat. "But what we can do for them is limited."

NATO has no role to play in helping rebuild the shattered economies of Eastern Europe — the European Community and others take care of that — though it has thrown open its doors to former enemies and offered regular diplomatic contacts.

NATO is anxious to reassure these countries about the future, partly because it wants to see stability established across the continent and partly to prove that the alliance is not just a cold war dinosaur that should be left to die.

But formal security guarantees to countries such as Poland or Romania are out of the question.

"First of all, very few, if any, NATO members would agree to that idea. Secondly, it would be downright provocative to the Soviet Union at a time when the last thing we want is to upset a very delicate situation there," said one alliance diplomat.

Nevertheless, alliance sources say, Eastern European diplomats have made clear in repeated contacts with NATO that they are seeking some sort of security guarantee in the medium to long-term.

Czechoslovak President Vaclav Havel said last week that the bloody crackdown in the Baltics "strengthens the reason for closer cooperation with NATO" as the only functioning security alliance in Europe.

"We are in the direct neighbourhood of this Colossus (the Soviet Union)," said Mr. Havel, who is due to visit NATO headquarters for talks next month.

Polish officials have indicated similar views. Hungary has taken up associate membership of the North Atlantic Assembly, an advisory body that groups parliamentarians from NATO's 16 members. Some Bulgarian political parties want their parliament to debate an application for NATO membership.

Romanian Foreign Minister Adrian Nastase said after a visit to NATO last week:

"In our geopolitical situation and in view of our contacts with Western Europe and the European Community, it would be totally natural to find a formula for association with NATO."

The response from NATO has been less than clear.

Secretary-General Manfred

Woerner, speaking after Mr. Nastase's visit, said NATO had no formal mechanisms for association with third countries and added: "We will reach solutions satisfactory to all sides."

One solution to the problem, some NATO diplomats say, would be to give these countries the feeling that they can count on the alliance for support in an informal way.

"Through the contacts we have now established, we can create uncertainty in people's minds about whether NATO might jump in to protect them," said one diplomat. "That in itself might be a deterrent to any aggressive action. The Soviets, for example, could never be quite sure how we would react."

The alliance is not only worried about the effects of instability in the Soviet Union, which still has huge conventional forces and thousands of nuclear weapons despite arms control agreements.

Nationalist and ethnic tensions — between, for example Romania and Hungary — were suppressed during the cold war but are now resurfacing. In addition, there is the worry that economic problems could cause serious unrest in the region.

The 34-nation Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) has gained new strength since the end of the cold war, but NATO diplomats say many Eastern European nations do not think it is strong enough to give them real security.

"CSCE works by consensus and that means that any one country can block any attempt to deal with problems," said one diplomat.

Battle for Kuwait could rival some of Beirut's worst

By Claude Salhani
Reuters

AMMAN — A battle to drive Iraqi soldiers from Kuwait City could bring about fierce house-to-house fighting rivaling some of the worst conflicts in the Lebanese capital Beirut.

Officials of the Kuwaiti toppled government say Iraqi forces are turning Kuwait's apartment blocks into formidable bunkers reinforced with concrete, as defensive positions against an allied onslaught.

The battle for Kuwait could turn out to be longer and more costly than military planners in the U.S.-led anti-Iraq coalition hope.

Beirut and Kuwait City have many similarities. Both cities boast new high-rise apartments, strongly built to withstand the harsh sun and salt air blowing off the sea.

Kuwait's luxurious apartments could offer excellent defensive positions against small arms fire and even light artillery.

Fifteen years of civil war in Beirut have shown how much punishment a modern building can withstand unless massive bombardment is used against it.

The question is: Will the allies use heavy weaponry that could kill Kuwaiti civilians and devastate the city in driving out the Iraqis?

During the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon, the Israeli army had to call in numerous air

strikes, often levelling entire buildings, killing civilians and combatants alike.

The Israelis, like the United States and its allies, faced political constraints at home that meant keeping losses to a minimum.

During the civil war, street fighting in Beirut often ended in stalemate, with militias fighting for months over a street, a building or even a single floor.

Weapons: the alliance can throw at the Iraqis are more sophisticated than those used by Lebanon's warring militias, but can these weapons be used without endangering civilians caught in the crossfire?

To use the U.S. military euphemism for civilian casualties: How much "collateral damage" can be sustained?

Even in Lebanon, the various militias and armies used tanks, mortars and field artillery on Beirut.

Casualties among the civilian population were often greater than those suffered by combatants.

U.S. military planners believe one option is to besiege Kuwait City to force an Iraqi surrender. Israel's siege of Beirut in August 1982 was in all practical terms a medieval one, yet supplies still filtered through.

"Sieges have a very limited effect and have never really worked. The allies would have an enormous problem," said a Western military expert in the area.

Aziz

(Continued from page 1)

Secretary of State James Baker. President George Bush, vacationing in Kennebunkport, Maine, told reporters: "We are determined to finish this job and do it right."

Mr. Bush said he did not know what would come of the talks, but he said Mr. Gorbachev was "trying very hard to seek an end to this conflict."

"He knows very well that the objectives spelled out by the United Nations... must be met in their entirety," Mr. Bush said. Defense Secretary Dick Cheney said the only thing that could slow the allied military campaign was the start of an Iraqi pullout from Kuwait.

"The only thing we can really believe in action," Mr. Cheney said on ABC's "This Week with David Brinkley." "We have to see him withdraw from Kuwait."

"We have a certain tempo to our military operations now and we're not going to break that tempo unless it is clear that he is complying with the (U.N.) Security Council directive," said Mr. Bush's National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft.

Mr. Baker, interviewed on CNN's "Newsmaker Sunday," said the Soviets were welcome to seek a diplomatic solution, but he expressed no optimism they would succeed.

"There is nothing to be lost by talking... and if that will result in the withdrawal of Iraq from Kuwait, more power to whoever is doing the talking," Mr. Baker said. "It remains to be seen, of course, whether anything can come of this session."

Mr. Baker added that even if an Iraqi withdrawal did follow the talks, "It's just not going to be because someone has been talking to the Iraqis. It's going to be because the coalition forces are doing what we have said for some time we would do" to force them out of Kuwait.

Egyptian Foreign Minister

Esmat Abdol Meguid Sunday criticised Iraq's offer but another official said it contained positive elements.

"(The Iraqi points) are in fact conditions for withdrawal which contradict U.N. Resolution 660," said Abdol Meguid.

"The issue is simple. Will Iraq accept an unconditional withdrawal on the basis of U.N. resolutions?... We haven't heard Iraq's answer yet," he told reporters.

But top presidential adviser Osama Al Baz was quoted as saying the Iraqi offer had positive elements. He also reaffirmed Egypt's support for the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO).

"The initiative has new complications more complicated than those before it," Mr. Baz said in remarks carried Sunday by the Middle East News Agency.

"Despite that, it has some positive elements, like Iraq's readiness to deal with the Security Council resolution and the mention for the first time of withdrawal," Dr. Baz said.

"It also did not refer to Kuwait as its 19th province."

Pakistani Foreign Minister Sahabzada Yaqub Khan was due in Tehran Sunday for peace talks.

His government is under pressure from opposition parties as well as some partners in the ruling Islamic Democratic Alliance to recall some 11,000 troops from the Saudi-based allied forces.

Tehran is sending a senior delegation to Iraq soon with a reply to a message Mr. Rafsanjani received from President Saddam a week ago in response to an Iranian peace initiative.

Bombs

(Continued from page 1)

Jan. 17, with no air raids late Saturday or early Sunday.

But a military communique reported attacks on residential areas elsewhere, as well as 110 raids on Iraqi military targets in the southern war zone. It said

four enemy warplanes were shot down, but did not give their nationality.

Baghdad was hounded by heavy rain and a sand storm, impairing visibility to such an extent that air raids may have been postponed.

Soldiers on leave arriving in the capital from the war zone reported allied air strikes on the highway linking Kuwait City with the southern Iraqi port city of Basra.

IRNA reported intensive allied bombings early Sunday on Basra and other southern Iraqi cities. It said the explosions shook windows in Khorramshahr in southwestern Iran, 40 kilometres east of Basra.

A U.S. spokesman said the allied air forces had flown 2,600 missions in the last 24 hours, bringing to 78,000 the total of sorties flown since the war began on Jan. 17.

No allied or Iraqi aircraft had been shot down in the last day. The Gulf allies had flown 150 missions to attack Iraqi Scud missile launcher sites, he said.

The Defence Department announced the deaths of three U.S. soldiers in the Gulf from medical reasons or accidents, bringing the total of war-related deaths to 48.

It said Sergeant Lawrence Welch, 41, died of heart failure and Sergeant Jeffrey Rollins, 23, and first sergeant Henry Sanders, 42, were killed in separate vehicle accidents.

Since the Gulf war began on Jan. 17, 12 U.S. soldiers were killed in action and 36 died in non-combat situations.

Oil slick

(Continued from page 1)

blocking the oil like a natural boom but authorities say wind and currents will eventually bring the slick around, taking it further down the Arabian Peninsula.

The 200 million gallon per day desalination plant at Jubail supplies the Saudi capital with three-quarters of its drinking water.

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Jordan Times

JORDAN MARKET PLACE

Edberg takes no. 1 spot despite semifinal defeat in Brussels

BRUSSELS (R) — Boris Becker ceded his world number one spot to Stefan Edberg Saturday after retiring hurt in the semifinals of the Belgian Indoor Tennis Tournament.

But Edberg, the second seed, had little cause to celebrate. He was upset by fourth-seeded Frenchman Guy Forget 3-6, 6-0, 6-3 in the other semifinal.

"Edberg will be the new number one Monday," said Richard Evans, ATP's director of communications.

The new rankings will show Edberg 17 points ahead of Becker, who led the Swede by 133 points before the Brussels tournament.

Becker, facing world number 25 Andrei Cherkasov of the

Soviet Union, played his best tennis of the week as he took the first set 6-2.

But after losing his service in the second game of the second set, things began to go wrong. After losing the next game, Becker examined his right thigh during the changeover. His play became increasingly ragged and he checked his thigh again at the next break.

The German, normally one of the fastest movers on the court, repeatedly struggled to reach Cherkasov's groundstrokes or simply did not react at all when the 20-year-old Soviet aimed for the sidelines.

Becker surrendered the set to Cherkasov by hitting a low volley

into the net and retired early in the final set after three struggling to hold serve. Cherkasov won 2-6, 6-3, 2-2.

"I already said I knew before the tournament there was a good chance that after this week I would be number two," Becker said.

"I hope my leg is not too badly hurt. My leg concerns me the most."

Becker laid the blame for his leg problem on the ATP Tour.

"I think that's the fault we have with this new tour. You have to play almost every week," he said. "I have to play 18 or 19 tournaments in order to stay on top and that is too much."

Edberg also saw his game go

downhill after winning the first set 6-4 against Forget.

Forget fine-tuned his powerful service and broke Edberg three times in a row to take the second set 6-0.

The Frenchman, who possesses the fastest service of the whole field here, kept the momentum going and inflicted a decisive mental blow to Edberg when he broke the Swede in the second game of the final set.

Forget, number 11 in the world, broke again in the eighth game and converted his second matchpoint with a volley past a helpless Edberg.

"He will be an interesting guy to follow in the next months," Edberg said of the Frenchman.

'Gazza' scores twice to get Spurs out of trouble

LONDON (R) — Tottenham's irrepressible international midfielder Paul Gascoigne showed why he is such an asset to the troubled English soccer club.

He scored two goals for the second time in successive F.A. Cup ties and earned the hard-up London side a lucrative quarter-final berth.

The 23-year-old England player struck the winning goal six minutes from the time as Tottenham beat Portsmouth 2-1 after they had trailed the second division strugglers for 20 minutes.

Three weeks ago he scored twice and set up two more goals in Spurs' 4-2 win over Oxford in the fourth round.

He is Tottenham's leading goalscorer with 17 this season, joint third highest among first division marksmen, and has three more than England striker and team mate Gary Lineker. Last season he scored only six.

Manager Terry Venables said: "Gascoigne scored two exceptional goals," adding with understatement: "I thought he had a good game."

Portsmouth manager Frank Burrows was full of praise for the player known to the nation's soccer fans simply as "Gazza".

"He is a super player. His

ability, and that of one or two others, was a telling factor today. That's why people pay loads of money for them."

Italian club Juventus were reportedly prepared to pay £7 million (\$13.7 million) for Gascoigne on the strength of his performances at last year's World Cup finals.

Tottenham may yet have to part with him and Lineker to pay off their crippling debts of more than £12 million (\$23.6 million).

But the club, who have not won a trophy since their two F.A. Cup triumphs in 1982 and 1983, are desperate to keep their two prize assets.

They are equally desperate for the glamour and money a Wembley Cup Final would bring after having slipped to sixth in the league and been knocked out of the League Cup in the quarter-finals.

Their success Saturday was offset by crowd trouble and defender Terri Fenwick breaking his ankle during the warm-up. Fenwick, just back in the side after a year's absence with a broken leg, landed awkwardly while jumping.

About 100 rival fans spilled over on to the pitch and exchanged blows after Gascoigne



Paul Gascoigne

scored his second goal and the match was delayed two minutes until police reinforcements restored order.

Arsenal's England defender Lee Dixon turned from villain to hero when he scored their winning goal in a 2-1 victory over Leeds in the marathon fourth round tie.

Dixon, who missed a penalty in Wednesday's second replay, scored Arsenal's second goal in the 43rd minute to set up a fifth round tie at third division Shrewsbury.

Manager George Graham said: "That performance was more like us of old. We got in there and competed among a minefield of tackles in midfield. It was a real battle of the giants."

Another goal-scoring hero was transfer-listed Gary Lund who stepped out of the shadows with a last minute winner for second division Notts County against Manchester City.

Lund, only in the side because first choice David Regis was cup tied, earned County a quarter-final place for the first time since 1984.

They were joined in the last eight by second division leaders West Ham and Cambridge of the third division, who thrashed League Cup semifinalists Sheffield Wednesday 4-0.

Substitute Jimmy Quinn scored a 77th minute winner to steer West Ham into the last eight against Crewe less than four minutes after coming on.

Dion Dublin scored twice for Cambridge, who set a club record of 15 matches without defeat with their ninth successive victory.

Manchester United visit Norwich Monday, while on the same night Nottingham Forest play Newcastle in a fourth round replay.

Lendl faces Sampras in Philadelphia final

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Top-seeded Ivan Lendl rallied from 0-3 in the final set to halt Brad Gilbert's upset bid at 6-4, 3-6, 6-4 in the semifinals of the \$1-million U.S. Pro Indoor Tennis Championships.

Lendl will play for the title against defending champion and no. 2 seed Pete Sampras, who served 10 aces to oust fourth-seeded John McEnroe 6-2, 6-4.

The Lendl-Gilbert match ended on the second match point when Gilbert drove a volley out of court.

Lendl, who has never lost to Gilbert in 15 meetings, lost the first match point by missing a shot on the left sideline by inches.

Lendl broke through Gilbert's service in the fourth and eighth games of the third set to tie at 4-4 after losing his first two service games.

He went ahead 5-4 when Gilbert hit a backhand out of court and broke Gilbert's service a third time in the 16-point final game, which went to deuce six times amid wrangling over line calls.

Lendl broke Gilbert's service in the fifth game of the first set by forcing Gilbert to net a shot. From there, games followed set-

vice with Lendl winning with a love game that included two aces, the second for the final point.

The second set was battled evenly to 3-2. Gilbert served an ace to win the seventh game at love. From deuce in the next game, Gilbert scored two placement shots down the line to break through Lendl's service and take a 3-2 lead.

Gilbert then served out the set from 15-15 in the ninth game to even the match, forcing Lendl to overdrive on the final two points.

Powerful, lengthy volleys from deep court were punctuated by psychological warfare. Gilbert mopped his brow with towels while Lendl fumed at delays of play. Each player slammed rackets to the blue carpet at moments of frustration, drawing warnings for racket abuse from umpire Steve Ullrich.

Lendl, a two-time Philadelphia finalist and the 1986 champion in a walkover by Tim Mayotte, had not dropped a set this tournament going into the semifinal.

Sampras, the U.S. Open champion and no. 2 seed, defeated McEnroe with sharp serves and strong drives from backcourt, often passing McEnroe and keeping him off-balance.

McEnroe made good on less than half his first serves, and 18 of his 30 second serves were won by Sampras. Sampras was good on 56 per cent of his first serves and won 13 of his 25 second serves.

"He's a great server," said McEnroe, who lost to Sampras for the third time in three meetings. "I didn't hit my first serve as well as I could have, but he hit his well, and it just sets that tone."

He said he was unhappy about playing an early afternoon match after playing night matches all week, but even with more preparation would have had trouble against Sampras.

"He's a great player," McEnroe said. "He's going to be even a better player. He's got the potential to be the no. 1 player in the world. He's got all the tools."

Sampras said he was happy with his serves early in the match. "Then in the beginning and middle of the second set, I started missing my first serves," he said. "I think if I'm going to win tomorrow, I have to be a little more consistent."

Sampras broke McEnroe's service twice in the first set. McEnroe double-faulted twice in a row to lose the third game and was forced into two errors in losing

the seventh game.

Sampras served two aces in the eighth game, reaching set point on the second ace at 10-15 after double-faulting. He lost the first set point with a cross-court drive that went out. McEnroe netted his next service return.

In the second set, service held to 3-3, then Sampras took a 40-0 lead in the seventh game and broke McEnroe's service from 40-30 with a passing shot down the line.

McEnroe fended off a match point in the ninth game with a backhand shot that trickled over the net cord.

It was announced before the match that Saturday was McEnroe's 32nd birthday, and he drew laughter from the crowd when he protested a service fault at 40-30 in the ninth game.

"Come on, it's my birthday," he pleaded. "Give me one... break."

Sampras won the point anyway, but was forced into two errors from the third deuce, reducing his lead to 5-4.

Sampras won on service in the 10th game, reaching match point with a backhand cross-court passing shot and finishing with his second ace of the game.

Garrison, Navratilova reach final of Chicago

CHICAGO (Agencies) — Martina Navratilova and Zina Garrison both scored easy, straight-set wins to set up a meeting in the final of the \$350,000 Virginia Slims of Chicago Women's Tennis Tournament.

The top-seeded Navratilova advanced with a 6-3, 6-2 victory over Helena Sukova of Czechoslovakia, while Garrison beat Canadian Helen Kelesi 6-1, 6-2 to reach the final.

Navratilova, ranked third in the world, will be seeking her 11th Chicago tournament title and a \$70,000 first prize against fellow-American Garrison, who won here in 1989. Garrison has beaten Navratilova just once in 30 tries.

The fifth-seeded Garrison put immediate pressure on the unseeded Kelesi, who earlier ousted third seed Jana Novotna of Czechoslovakia and seventh-seeded American Amy Frazier.

Kelesi held serve only once in the match.

"I put pressure on her early so she couldn't get in her groove," said Garrison. "She got a little more depressed and started to give me a lot more easy balls. She depends on her emotion to psyche herself up."

Navratilova neutralized Sukova's pace by varying her returns against the sixth-seeded Czechoslovak.

"She was going at me with pace, I was going after her with spin, hitting kicks and slices," said Navratilova. "She usually picks my serves well but I mixed it up better today and kept her off balance."

Navratilova lost just nine points off serve in the 52-minute match.

Despite her disappointing record against Navratilova, Garrison promised a spirited match.

"I am going to hit out on the ball," Garrison said. "I am a fighter and I am not afraid of her."

"I didn't think about my serve much," Navratilova said. "My serve percentage has been high all week, but I've over been a high-percentage server. That hasn't been my style. I go for my volley for the big point. The serve sets it up and the volley puts it away."

Sukova said she knew if her first serve was not good, Navratilova would blast her second.

"If I didn't hit an ace, she would ace me on a return," Sukova said.

Swedes not enthusiastic about Borg's comeback

BRUSSELS, Belgium (AP) — Stefan Edberg and Mats Wilander are less than enthusiastic about the attempted comeback of fellow Swede and former tennis great Bjorn Borg.

"It is sad in a way. I don't see any need for it," said Edberg during the Donnay Indoor Championship this past week.

"There is a much greater chance that he would fail rather than succeed."

The 26-year-old Wilander is attempting his own comeback this year after a bad year, but his finding the going tough. He said it would be even harder for Borg, who will turn 35 in June.

"Getting into the top 100 would be a real achievement (for Borg)," said Wilander.

Borg, who won 11 Grand Slam titles between 1974 and 1981, has expressed interest in making a comeback a decade after his last French Open title.

Wilander and Edberg have both gained the no. 1 ranking since Borg's heyday. Edberg took the top ranking again during the Donnay tournament in Brussels.

Borg has been training extensively over the last few months and is expected to seek some wild card entries for European clay court tournaments this spring.

Mogren, Svan give Sweden double win in 50k ski race

VAL DI FIEMME, Italy (AP) — Torgny Mogren, after winning a bronze and a silver in his last two races here, finally struck gold as he beat fellow Swede Gunde Svan by 17.2 seconds in Sunday's 50k freestyle race at the World Nordic Ski Championships.

Mogren covered cross-country skiing, blue ribbon event held on a tough course with a total climb of 1,725 meters in 2 hours, 03 minutes and 31.6 seconds.

It was the fastest time ever recorded in the 50k, but the cross-country courses are all different and there are no official

records.

Maurilio de Zolt of Italy, the 1987 world champion, was third, 30.1 seconds behind. At 40, De Zolt became the oldest medalist in World Championship history.

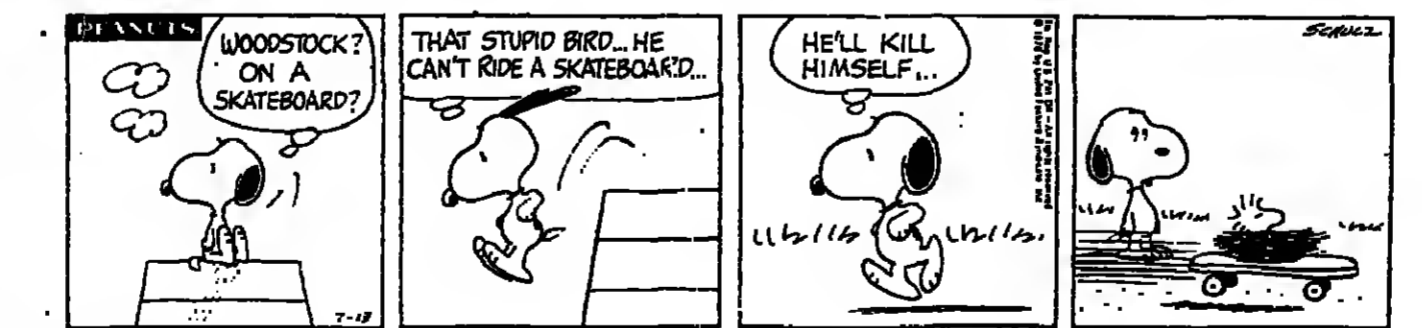
Bjorn Dahlie of Norway, winner of the 15k freestyle and the anchor on Norway's winning 40k relay team, was fourth, 1:20.4 behind. He led the race until near the halfway point, then dropped back.

Norway topped the final standings with 5 gold, 3 silver and 2 bronze medals.

Mutt'n'Jeff



Peanuts



Andy Capp



GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TAMARA HIRSCH
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FORCED INTO SUBMISSION

North-South vulnerable. South deals.

NORTH

♠ J 4 2

♥ 10 8 7

♦ K 9

♣ A Q 10 6 4

WEST

♠ A 9 8 7

♥ K 9 6 4 2

♦ 7 5

♣ J 10 8 4 2

EAST

♠ A Q 3

♥ J 10 8 4 2

♦ 9 8 5 2

SOUTH

♠ K Q 10 6 5

♥ J 5

♦ A Q 6 3

♣ K J

The bidding:

South West North East

1 ♠ Pass 2 ♠ Pass

2 ♠ Pass 2 ♠ Pass

4 ♠ Pass 2 ♠ Pass

Opening lead: Four of ♣

The enormous power of the trump suit is the key to the play and defense of many hands. When you have trump length, or trump shortness and the bidding suggests that partner might have trump length, it is usually right to lead your longest suit in an attempt to make declarer lose control of the hand by making him ruff to shorten his trumps. Here's an example.

North was a little too strong for a simple raise, but not quite good enough in either values or trump length for a jump raise to three spades. After compromising with a two-club response at his first turn, North took a preference to spades next. South had more than enough to go on to game.

All too many players, looking at the trump length in the West hand, would lead one of their doubletons in the minor suits, looking for a ruff. Declarer would win, force out the ace of spades and the defenders would have to take their two heart tricks right away to hold declarer to 10 tricks.

Look what a difference an initial heart lead makes. The defenders take their two tricks in the suit and then continue with a third round. Declarer must ruff, and is down to the same trump length as West. If declarer doesn't draw trumps, West can manipulate his holding to assure two more tricks for the defenders, which defeats the contract. If declarer leads trumps, all West has to do is hold up the ace until the third round. Then another heart forces declarer to ruff with his last trump and West's nine of trumps controls the game. Down two.

Horoscope not received

THE BETTER HALF

By Harris



"I let Stanley leave the house without me — but I keep him on a leash!"

JUMBLE

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

ESTAC

RODUG

WHYTOR

JURNIY

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

ANSWER: TO

Yesterday's Jumble: BILGE ASSAY IMPAIR POLITE

Answer: What are the chances of most of them getting slim?—SLIM

(Answers Monday)

THE Daily Crossword by James Barrick

ACROSS

1 Drop heavily

5 An Olympian

9 Dorian

13 To

14 Baitan worker

15 Vocalist's offering

16 Blue flag

17 Moldings

18 Auditorium

19 Like some

20 Lenon's widow

21 Writer Cathar

22 Like a

23 Jawbreaker

24 Enticement

25 Character

26 Use a bookie

27 Titled

28 Vocalist's offering

29 Lengths; abbr.

30 Double curve

31 Window

32 Place of rest

33 Squash

34 Tel —

35 Player's word

36 Male animal

37 Occupation

38 Lure

39 Church

40 Publication

41 Fraternal order

42 Writes

43 Colors

DOWN

1 Strallaced

2 Pastamak girl

3 Of hearing

4 Turk, VIP

5 Hold

6 Sufficient long

7 Send

8 Appears

9 Indian of importance

Bulgaria seeks foreign capital for new airport

SOFIA (R) — Bulgaria is seeking foreign capital to build a new international airport as part of plans to overhaul its transport and communications sectors, Transport Minister Veselin Pavlov has said.

Pavlov said that Bulgaria, emerging from four decades of communist central planning, wants to improve air, road and rail links and lay optical fibre communications systems.

All these major projects would be carried out without burdening the state budget, he said.

Bulgaria believes the new airport, to be built on the site of the existing one, has great potential because the country's geographical position makes it a natural gateway for the Middle East, Asia and Africa.

"We are planning this airport completely with foreign capital. We envisage selling the rights to operate the airport to the company which will build it and, after

the company has repaid its investment and a certain profit, it will turn it over to this country," Pavlov said in an interview.

Bulgaria has received around 80 proposals from different companies proposing investments ranging between \$350 million and \$800 million. Officials said about six of these proposals were being treated seriously.

The government hopes to issue the terms for a competition soon, and receive final bids in four months, allowing the government to announce the winner by the end of June.

Another major construction project is a highway from Kalofina on the Yugoslav border to Svilengrad on the Turkish border.

"We shall proceed in the same way as with the airport. The highway will be operated by the company that builds it," Pavlov said.

Sri Lanka seeks \$500m IMF loan

COLOMBO (R) — Sri Lanka is seeking a loan of up to \$500 million from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) this year to help offset a shortfall of foreign exchange caused by the Gulf war, a senior government economist has said.

"We are losing between \$100 and \$150 million a year by way of falling remittances from expatriate workers," the economist, who declined to be named, said in an interview.

More than 70,000 Sri Lankan workers have returned from Kuwait since Iraq invaded oil-rich Kuwait last August. A further 400,000 Sri Lankans are still in the Middle East.

Colombo has already drawn the entire \$180 million it was allocated under an IMF structural adjustment facility from October 1989 to October 1991, the economist said.

But under an enhanced structural adjustment facility of a maximum of \$500 million can be obtained, dispersed over three years, he said.

"The conditions are tougher than the normal facility and IMF

officials would regularly monitor the progress of Sri Lanka's economy. But we need the loan," the economist said.

Under the structural adjustment facility, the IMF monitored the loan and requested reports from Colombo every three to six months.

Under the enhanced facility, reports are more regular — sometimes every two weeks or once a month — and targets suggested by the IMF must be achieved.

Most economic reforms proposed for Sri Lanka by the IMF since 1989 are already being implemented, including budget cuts, reduced government spending and privatisation of loss-making state-run firms.

The Gulf war would likely be a medium-term problem and not a temporary one as earlier expected, he said.

"We should prepare ourselves for this," he noted.

Sri Lanka is trying to contain economic fall-out from the Gulf war while battling a Tamil separatist revolt in the north and east that is using up financial resources.

Soviet price reform to include lower taxes and higher wages

MOSCOW (R) — The Soviet Union will compensate citizens for a planned increase in retail prices by raising salaries and benefits and cutting taxes on business, a senior government official has said.

Vladimir Shcherbakov, chairman of the State Committee on Labour, told the Communist Party daily Pravda that taxes on enterprises' profits would be cut from 45 per cent to 35 per cent.

Workers' wages will rise by an average of 60 roubles (about \$35 at the commercial rate) per month, Shcherbakov said. The average Soviet salary is now 250 roubles (\$150) a month.

News that the central government planned to institute steep increases in retail prices was reported last week in the daily newspaper Izvestia.

Prices in the heavily subsidised food sector have been kept artificially low for decades, leading to extreme wastage.

Izvestia said the changes would include a tripling of bread and meat prices and increases of 130 per cent for milk and fish, 135 per cent for sugar, 240 per cent for salt and 100 per cent for tea, butter, cooking oil and cigarettes. There has been no official confirmation of the prices or how and when they would be imposed.

But the chairman of the State Committee on Prices told Pravda Friday the central government would implement the price changes in cooperation with the Federation Council — a top executive body including President Mikhail Gorbachev and the heads of the 15 constituent republics.

Vyacheslav Senchagov said central government would set ceilings for prices on meat, milk, eggs, vegetable oil, sugar, bread, shoes, linen, underwear and most children's items. Republics would have a right to set prices below the ceilings.

U.S. business sales register steep decline

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. business sales plunged 2.3 per cent in December, the steepest in four years, the government said in a report analysts said showed the American economy in a significant decline.

The Commerce Department reported that business sales slowed to a seasonally adjusted \$330.9 billion, even worse than the 1.5 per cent decline in November and the biggest drop since they fell 3.1 per cent in January 1987.

The report on overall sales came a day after the department said sales on the retail level continued to fall in January. The 0.9 per cent decline followed a 1.5 per cent drop in December for the first back-to-back decreases in seven months.

Retail sales, which were flat in November, haven't risen since a barely perceptible 0.9 per cent advance in October.

However, the report also had a touch of good news. It said business inventories in December dropped 0.7 per cent, to a seasonally adjusted \$310.7 billion after advancing 0.2 per cent in November and 0.1 per cent in October.

In past recessions, big pileups of goods on shelves and backlogs caused growing production cutbacks and job layoffs as businesses struggled to sell off their backlogs.

The activity pushed the ratio of inventories-to-sales to 1.53 from 1.5 in November. The ratio means it would take 1.53 months to exhaust the backlog at the December sales pace. It stood at 1.5 in November and 1.18 in October.

The ratio jumped to 1.71 during the 1981-82 recession and to 1.75 in the 1971-75 downturn, and analysts noted that businesses are using new techniques to keep backlogs lean and

under control.

"Instead of waiting until later in the recession to cut back on inventories, companies clearly are cutting back early," said Bruce Steinberg, an economist with Merrill Lynch Capital Markets in New York. "To some extent, that will moderate the decline."

But at the same time, Steinberg said, "the consumer sector is retrenching at this point about as much as had happened in the early '80s and '70s" when the two deepest postwar recessions occurred.

"Inventories are going to contribute to a lesser extent to the overall economic decline, but consumer cutbacks ... are more severe than they usually are and therefore the overall economy is declining significantly," he said.

In addition to the 1.5 per cent decline in retail purchases, manufacturing sales plunged 3.1 per cent after a 2.5 per cent drop in November. Sales on the wholesale level were off 1.2 per cent after falling 1.5 per cent the previous month.

Retail inventories, on the other hand, declined 0.8 per cent in December and 0.2 per cent in November. They were off a similar 0.8 per cent on the manufacturing level and 0.3 per cent on the wholesale level.

Manufacturing inventories had risen 0.2 per cent in November, while wholesale backlogs grew 0.7 per cent.

Meanwhile, the U.S. merchandise trade deficit fell in 1990 to its lowest level in seven years, the government has said. Analysts said the report showed the only strong element of an economy in recession.

The Commerce Department said exports rose 8.3 per cent last year to a record \$391 billion, nearly twice the 1.6 per cent gain in imports, which totaled \$195 billion, also a record.

War jitters hit Japan's foreign travel

TOKYO (R) — Japanese tourists, who travelled abroad in record numbers last year, are cancelling trips to Europe and the United States out of fear of the Gulf war, the Japan Travel Bureau (JTB) has said. JTB, Japan's largest travel agency, said about 87,000 people representing 20 per cent of its total reservations had cancelled plans to join tours overseas between January and March for fear of guerrilla attacks. In 1990 a record 10 million Japanese travelled abroad. U.S. and Europe-bound tours had the highest cancellation rates, ranging from 30 to 40 per cent, JTB reported in an in-house survey. Destinations in China and the South Pacific, however, had not been affected by cancellations, the report said. More Japanese were choosing domestic tours.

Pakistanis strike to protest privatisation

KARACHI, Pakistan (AP) — Thousands of workers in this southern port city staged a one-day strike Sunday to protest plans by the government of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to privatise most state-run industries.

"The strike is the first step to force the government to reverse its privatisation policy," said Habibuddin Junedi, senior vice-president of the All Pakistan State Enterprise Action Committee, an anti-privatisation lobbying group which helped organise the protest.

"We will not accept the government's denationalisation plans which have not been ratified by the parliament," said Junedi. Junedi estimated that about 350,000 workers in state-run enterprises in Karachi took part in the strike. The protest action was restricted to Karachi, the country's largest city and its most important financial and industrial centre.

Pakistan's powerful trade unions have been the strongest critics of Sharif's plans to sell off shares in most government-run enterprises and industries, ranging from banking and insurance to textiles and cement.

The unions have predicted that as many as 150,000 jobs will be lost in the first year of Sharif's sweeping privatisation programme.

Sharif, a self-made millionaire and one of the country's leading industrialists, has embraced an unfettered free-market approach as the means to curing the country's ailing economy.

Bullion experts see gold price heading lower

JOHANNESBURG (R) — Gold, its reputation fading as a popular investment haven in times of crises, could drop further in value this year, bullion experts have said.

Robert Weinberg of British brokers James Capel told a conference of stockbrokers he expected world gold prices to average \$380 an ounce in 1991, against \$384 last year, and could fall even sharper.

"I suspect that we may find gold dipping down to \$340, perhaps lower. I also have a horrible suspicion that we have already seen the high for the year," he added.

Gary Maude, managing director of the gold division of Gencor Ltd., South Africa's second biggest mining house, said a new "gold rush" started a decade ago, but was virtually unnoticed for years.

As a result, Western gold output soared to 1,670 tonnes in 1990, from 947 tonnes 10 years earlier. In the period, South African mines, the world's leading suppliers, saw their output slide to 601 tonnes from 672 tonnes.

World economic stability in the 1980s also made gold less interesting than foreign exchange for investors, he said.

At relatively low prices, jewellery demand had mopped up much of the extra supplies on the market, but an economic squeeze now limited that sort of spending, he added.

Maude estimated that, at \$370 an ounce, one-fifth of world output is mined at a loss — including one-quarter of South African production and 30 per cent of

Canada's, another important supplier.

So-called marginal mines in South Africa now were using their cash reserves and borrowing to continue mining. "Some produce gold at \$410 an ounce to sell at \$380 in the hope that if they survive long enough they will see a higher gold price," he added.

He said it was self-defeating and urged mines to stop the practice, even though it would cause severe unemployment, temporary foreign exchange losses and loss of revenue for wages and support industries.

A fall in South African production would coincide with a levelling off in growth of supplies from other countries. The sooner this process perceptions of unlimited gold supply irrespective of price will be eliminated, he said.

"And since 60 per cent of gold reserves are deep in the bowels of South Africa, in time to come the price will have to rise high enough to unlock those reserves. And that will take \$700 an ounce," he added.

Weinberg attributed the loss of gold's speculative allure and its value as an insurance tool to rapid growth of derivative markets. "Today, practically any risk may be hedged and any speculation followed directly. Who needs gold as a proxy any longer?"

He said he expected gold supplies in the next decade to tail off. Exploration budgets have been severely trimmed as cash flows dwindle, raising new equity capital was increasingly difficult, and a considerable number of new mining projects and expansions have been indefinitely postponed.

ANNOUNCEMENT

I, the Pakistani national Allah Dita Kalou Karmah, wish to change my name to read All Dita Kalou Karmah.

TRANSLATOR/INTERPRETER

Arabic, English, French

Call 687437

Qantas suspends Seoul flights

SYDNEY (R) — Australia's state-owned international carrier Qantas had indefinitely deferred plans for a weekly flight to South Korea because of the Gulf war. The direct Sydney-to-Seoul service, which had been due to start in April, was being reviewed due to "the impact of the Gulf war and the uncertain world aviation economic climate," the airline said. Qantas said it would discuss flights to Seoul through the Southern Japanese city of Fukuoka with authorities in Tokyo. This would not clash with the agreement with South Korea, but needed approval from Japan, which had so far been reluctant to agree, it said. Korean Airlines already operates services to Australia, and Qantas has reciprocal rights for the Sydney-Seoul route.

AMMAN EXCHANGE RATES

Sunday, February 17, 1991 Central Bank official rates			
	Buy	Sell	
U.S. dollar	664.0	668.0	
Pound Sterling	1306.3	1314.1	
Deutschemark	449.1	451.8	
Swiss franc	523.0	526.1	
French franc			131.9 132.7
Japanese yen (for 100)			308.9 312.0
Dutch guilder			398.7 401.1
Swedish krona			120.3 121.0
Italian lira (for 100)			59.8 60.2
Belgian franc (for 10)			218.5 219.8

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For appointment please contact 642741 daily between 0900-1300 and 1600-1800 hrs.

TODAY AT

Cinema **CONCORD** Tel: 677420

RESCUE
Show: 3:30, 6:45, 10:30 p.m.
SENIOR WEEK
Show: 5:15, 8:30 p.m.

Cinema **NUJUM** Tel: 675571

ROBOCOB

Show: 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30

Cinema **RAINBOW** Tel: 625155

MAD MAX Part II

Performances: 3:30, 6:30, 8:30 p.m.

Cinema **PHILADELPHIA** Tel: 634144

LAMBADA

Performances: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30

Cinema **PLAZA** Tel: 699238

Adel Imam — Neill

SHAME, LUBU

Show: 12:15, 13:15, 7:15, 9:15 p.m.

BEACH GIRLS

Show: 5:00 p.m.
Performances: 12:00, 3:00, 5:15, 7:15, 9:15

JORDAN WELFARE LOTTERY

Special issue No. 3

Drawing of Feb. 17, 1991

Winning Tickets

Holder of ticket No. **41833**
Wins JD 30,000

Holder of ticket No. **67019**
Wins JD 6,000

Holder of ticket No. **77551**
Wins JD 3,500

Holder of ticket No. **18136**
Wins JD 3,000

Holder of ticket No. **83149**
Wins JD 2,500

Holder of ticket No. **83433**
Wins JD 2,000

Holder of ticket No. **36398**
Wins JD 1,000

Holder of ticket No. **68580**
Wins JD 800

Ten consolation prizes totalling JD 1,500 each wins JD 150

41834 41843 41933 42833 51833

41832 41823 41733 40833 31833

Ten consolation prizes totalling JD 750 each wins JD 75

67010 67029 67119 68019 77019

67018 67009 67919 66019 57019

Ten consolation prizes totalling JD 500 each wins JD 50

77552 77561 77651 78551 87551

77550 77541 77451 76551 67551

Ten consolation prizes totalling JD 300 each wins JD 30

18137 18146 18236 19136 28136

18135 18126 18036 17136 08136

Ten consolation prizes totalling JD 150 each wins JD 15

83140 83159 83249 84149 93149

83148 83139 83049 82149 73149

Ten consolation prizes totalling JD 100 each wins JD 10

83434 83443 83533 84433 93433

83432 83423 83333 82433 73433

Ten consolation prizes totalling JD 60 each wins JD 6

36399 36308 36498 37398 46398

36397 36388 36298 35398 26398

Ten consolation prizes totalling JD 40 each wins JD 4

68581 68590 68680 69580 78580

68589 68570 68480 67580 58580

Ticket numbers **37712 08240 12910 68940** win JD 250 each

Ticket numbers **60359 69081 40134 40429** win JD 200 each

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6856 2121 Win JD 50 each

6011 6704 4186 Win JD 30 each

244 738 Win JD 10 each

10,000 ticket ending with **6** Win JD 2 each

COVER PRIZES FOR THE LOTTERY SELLERS

Fifty covers, attached to the stub of 10 ending in **303 708 936 348 444** Win JD 10

Next Draw takes place on **March 2, 1991**
First eight biggest prizes are issued from GUVS headquarters

More hurdles ahead on Pretoria road to reforms

JOHANNESBURG (R) — Hurdles on the road to substantive talks about post-apartheid South Africa were only half-cleared by a new agreement between the government and the African National Congress (ANC), both sides said Sunday.

The ANC agreed to curb the activities of its armed wing, Umkhonto We Sizwe (Spear of the Nation), and the government promised to rein in security forces and accelerate the release of political prisoners in the accord announced last Friday.

Both the ANC and the government had hoped for a breakthrough agreement that would revive faltering progress towards negotiations on establishment of non-racial democracy. But "there are conflicting interpretations ... on both sides," a senior government source said.

ANC information director Pato Jordan added: "We would not say the agreement clears the way for full-scale political negotiations because the question of political prisoners and the return of political exiles has not been dealt with extensively."

The two sides give different estimates of the number of political prisoners likely to be freed by April 30, the ANC's deadline for their release.

The ANC talks of 3,500 prisoners, but Justice Minister Kobie Coetsee says there are fewer than 1,000.

South Africa's year-old peace process ran into trouble over interpretation of the ANC's agreement last August to suspend its anti-apartheid guerrilla war and "related activities," and over the government's slowness to release political prisoners.

A source in the security forces said key issues of ANC arms caches, its continued recruitment of cadres, and the creation of self-defence units were not satisfactorily resolved by Friday's announcement.

This followed personal intervention by President F.W. de Klerk and ANC leader Nelson Mandela to speed their officials' work after five months of wrangling and deadlock.

The ANC agreed not to infiltrate men or arms into South Africa. It also undertook not to train guerrillas within the country, incite violence or threaten to resume armed action.

In return, the government recognised the right of ANC supporters to be members of the armed wing and the group's right to peaceful protest.

"We made it clear that we are not going to surrender weapons; now and even in the future. Those structures, arms and men, are to remain where they are," ANC official Mathew Phosa said later.

But Law and Order Minister Adrian Vlok said he wanted weapons hidden during the ANC's 29-year war against apar-

theid to be brought into the open.

De Klerk himself said he regarded the agreement on arms caches as "inadequate."

While the ANC said the agreement meant the government had accepted the ANC's right to use force to repel attacks during factional fighting, Vlok denied there had been agreement on the ANC's proposed self-defence units.

"I do not want any organisation to have self-defence units ...," he said.

Meanwhile a nine-nation commonwealth committee has decided to retain all sanctions against South Africa, although it suggested sports boycotts might be eased later this year.

The special meeting Saturday followed an announcement on Feb. 5 by De Klerk that he was proposing to scrap the last major apartheid laws covering land and race classification.

Canadian External Affairs Minister Joe Clark, who chairs the committee, said the panel felt promises weren't enough.

"We think that if there is to be any relief to sanctions, that should be in response to particular actions, not promises, not undertakings to do something, but actual things that have been done to change the system," he said Saturday.

He did say, however, the first embargoes to be dropped would probably be those against sports and travel.

Yeltsin says Gorbachev freezing reforms

MOSCOW (R) — Russian leader Boris Yeltsin has accused Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev of freezing reform and moving to roll back democratic changes he launched himself, the independent Postfactum News Agency has said.

"There is a serious problem in the fact that the country's leadership has clearly swerved to the right in its policies, towards the freezing of reform and democratic processes," it quoted Yeltsin as saying.

"There is a clear retreat from perestroika, which was begun in 1985 at the initiative of the president (Gorbachev). Now, also at his initiative, it is being wrapped up."

The agency said Yeltsin was speaking on Friday to a delegation of U.S. senators touring the Soviet Union to study human rights in Moscow and the Baltic republics.

Radicals say there is a clear drive by the Kremlin and the Communist Party to oust Yeltsin as president of the Russian Federation.

"There is no doubt — the centre is mounting a massive attack on the democrats," commentator Sergei Parkhomenko said in the radical newspaper Nezavisimaya Gazeta.

Hardline Communists in the Russian parliament — focus for radical reform policies and opposition to the more conservative Kremlin line — are trying to force a vote of no confidence in Yeltsin.

They have gathered enough signatures to hold a special session which could call Yeltsin to account.

The move came after one of the Russian government's leading economic reformers, Gennady Filshin, resigned as deputy premier amid accusations in Communist Party newspapers of involvement in illegal dealings with a British-based company.

Filshin denied the charges but said he could no longer work in an atmosphere of a campaign to discredit him and the Russian Federation's entire leadership.

"The centre," said Valery Pogorelov of Moscow City Council's radical newspaper Kuranty, "is preparing the ground for the neutralisation of the leadership of a too important and too independent republic."

In Soviet political terminology, the "centre" means central authorities in the Kremlin and the newly-resurgent Communist Party, while "democrats" covers liberals and radicals who seek deep or total change in the Soviet system.

Sovietskaya Rossiya, organ of the hardline Russian Communist Party, published a blistering attack on Yeltsin, Gorbachev's only major political rival.

An open letter from a Moscow voter accused him of working to undermine Gorbachev and the entire Soviet Union.

Hardliners seeking Gorbachev's ouster claim he will meet them

MOSCOW (AP) — A small group of hard-liners who advocate dictatorship have claimed that President Mikhail Gorbachev has agreed to meet and discuss their plan to replace him.

But Vladimir Voronin, head of the self-proclaimed National Salvation Committee, admitted he has no date yet for the meeting.

"I spoke with Gorbachev face-to-face" and he promised a formal meeting sometime in the future, Voronin said. He refused to elaborate on his encounter with the president, and it was not immediately possible to verify his claim.

Voronin said he hopes to persuade Gorbachev to admit failure and voluntarily surrender power to a collective dictatorship.

He made his announcement at a meeting in Moscow intended to draw together hardliners who, like the committee, believe Gorbachev's democratic reforms must be suspended to prevent the country from splitting apart and to halt the collapse of the economy.

Voronin and his allies have said

they plan to persuade the current government to hand over power to their committee, an obscure body with an unknown number of members that is part of the legislature's centrist bloc, formed last fall.

After taking power peacefully, the committee would suspend parliament, the presidency, political parties and the press in order to have absolute power to implement its programme and preserve the Soviet Union.

Saturday's meeting was billed as a session for organising the pressure that would force a turnover of power.

It drew just 180 people, nearly a third of them journalists and observers, despite Voronin's claim that 22 political organisations already back the committee, including the Soyuz group of hardline parliamentarians led by Col. Viktor Alksnis.

Hardliners like Voronin and Alksnis, who claim to represent orderly rule, appear to be gaining strength as the Soviet Union faces the possibility of economic collapse and political disintegration.

A national poll conducted by the Soviet Centre for Public Opinion in January found that 22 per cent agreed that "harsh dictatorship is the only solution to the current situation," while 61 per cent disagreed. The centre's Alexander Tskitish said the survey covered 2,016 people in 47 cities and rural areas, and had a 3 per cent margin of error.

Twenty-one people have already died in Moscow's crackdown on independence movements in the Baltics — military actions that were encouraged by local "National Salvation Committees."

Reformers blame Gorbachev's turn to the right on severe pressure from the military and hardliners in his own Communist Party.

Some of the observers at the Saturday meeting said the low turnout strengthened their opinion that the committee depends on high-level backing and has no broad popular support.

Voronin has already met with such officials as KGB Chairman Vladimir Kryuchkov and former Prime Minister Nikolai Rykhlov.

Car bomb kills 21 in Medellin

MEDELLIN, Colombia (R) — A huge car bomb exploded thousands of people heading home from a bullfight in the Colombian drug capital, Medellin, killing 21 in the country's worst attack for months, officials said Sunday.

No group immediately claimed responsibility for the Saturday night blast and there were no clues to identify the culprits, officials said.

"Whoever is responsible, these acts are carried out by enemies of Colombia, of its democracy, liberty and people," the government said in a statement condemning the attack.

A car packed with 200 kilograms of explosives, detonated by remote control, blew up in a

packed street outside the Macarena Bullring near the centre of Medellin, Colombia's second city, as the bullfight crowd was leaving.

Police and hospital officials confirmed 21 deaths, including those of eight policemen who were apparently the specific target of the attack.

Another 132 people were treated for injuries in hospital, some of them with severe burns, officials said.

The blast sent a fireball flashing down the street and turned dozens of cars into scorched and twisted wrecks. Charred bodies were strewn around as rescue workers tried to pull other victims from wrecked cars.

Medellin, base of Colombia's

highest cocaine cartel some 250 kilometres northwest of Bogota, has been a battleground since drug traffickers declared war on the government in August 1989.

After dozens of assassinations and explosions the traffickers called a truce in July 1990. This was the first major bomb blast since then.

Left-wing guerrillas, who recently launched a new offensive against the government, have also bombed police patrols in cities but have never attacked on this scale.

The Medellin bomb exploded a few hours after a top drug lord surrendered to justice officials in an apparent new success for the government's policy of placating the powerful traffickers.

Former contra chief killed in Managua

MANAGUA (AP) — Former contra leader Enrique Bermudez was shot and killed by an unidentified gunman as he stepped out of his car in front of a downtown hotel.

Bermudez, a member of the contra directorate that had waged war against the leftist former Sandinista government, was shot once in the head late Saturday.

The unidentified assailant fled on foot. An Associated Press correspondent was at the scene and witnessed the shooting, which occurred at about 11:00 p.m. (0500 GMT).

Assistant police chief Alvaro Guzman confirmed Bermudez was killed and that investigators had no suspects in the shooting.

After years based in Miami, Bermudez returned to Managua shortly after President Violeta Barrios de Chamorro was elected on Feb. 25.

The contras and the United States had backed her campaign, and the rebels agreed to a ceasefire with Mrs. Chamorro on April

19, six days before she took office.

But Bermudez recently had criticised her government for allegedly not paying attention to the needs of former contras.

He was ousted as the rebels' top military leader in February 1990 after weathering years of infighting and accusations of corruption and human rights violations.

Bermudez, long considered a hardliner, had close ties to the late dictator Anastasio Somoza Debayle, who was overthrown by the Sandinistas in 1979.

Bermudez, 58, had run the U.S.-backed contra army in one post or another until his ouster. He remained a military officer after that, but had no responsibilities.

Contra officials said at the time that Bermudez's ouster was intended as a signal to the Sandinista government and was not a rejection of Bermudez.

"In a democracy, military officers do not rule for life," said a

spokesman, contrasting Bermudez's departure with the 11-year military rule of Sandinista President Daniel Ortega.

The Sandinistas and some human rights organisations had accused contra troops under Bermudez of killing two nuns, one a U.S. citizen, in an attack on a church vehicle in northern Nicaragua in January 1990.

The contras blamed the Sandinista government.

Bermudez also was accused in a lawsuit filed in Miami in February last year of ordering his troops to torture and kill an American engineer, Benjamin Linder, who had been helping the Sandinistas build a dam in Nicaragua.

The contras say Linder, 27, died in a firefight and was in Sandinista uniform.

A federal judge in Miami threw out the suit in September 1990.

Bermudez was a former officer of the Somoza National Guard and the regime's military attaché in Washington when the Sandinistas ousted the dictator.

Some British royals are shirkers — poll

LONDON (AP) — The Sunday Times, which has castigated members of Britain's royal family for not doing enough for the country's war effort, said a poll shows 63 per cent of Britons who have a view on the subject agree.

"The royal family, apart from the queen and the prince and princess of Wales (her eldest son and daughter-in-law), is not doing enough for the war effort," the newspaper said in its Sunday editions.

"That is the view of almost six in 10 British adults with an opinion on the subject."

A Sunday Times editorial last week accused some young members of the queen's family of

displaying "upper class decadence and insensitivity" while

it singled out the duke of York, the queen's second son, for playing golf in Spain on a break from his military duties.

Other newspapers said later Prince Edward, the queen's third son, should put his theatrical talents to use by entertaining the troops.

In a related question on the National Opinion Polls (NOP) survey, commissioned by the Sunday Times, 42 per cent agreed that some royals "are engaging in activities which are inappropriate during a period when the country is at war."

Japan's worst nuclear plant mishap raises fears

MIHAMA, Japan (AP) — Makio Tashiro, seated behind the counter of his clock shop, quietly told how an accident at the nearby nuclear power plant had revived his worst nightmares of a reactor meltdown.

Plant and government officials say the accident on Feb. 9 at the plant nine kilometres from the shop was by no means a meltdown.

They say an emergency shutdown was ordered because abnormal radiation levels were detected in a reactor when radioactive water leaked from one cooling system to another after a steam generator tube cracked.

Tashiro, 39, has been assured only a small amount of radiation leaked into the atmosphere and poses no health risk. Still, he has considered moving away from the plant, which stands near the white sand beaches of central Japan's western shore.

"It's too late by the time there's a disaster that sets off a high reading," he said.

What is being called Japan's worst nuclear accident — the first to set off a reactor core's emergency cooling system — has raised new questions about the government's ambitious programme to expand its atomic energy programme.

Critics noted that it followed a mandatory annual safety check by only a few months.

Anti-nuclear activists have said the tube suspected of causing the accident is prone to wear and is the weak point in the design of 17 of Japan's 40 nuclear power plants.

Anti-nuclear groups and some government officials believe the accident will increase fears about nuclear dangers, which could have profound implications for a resource-poor nation that must import virtually all its oil.

"It is inevitable that public concern about the safety of nuclear power will increase as a result of the accident," said Hiro-michi Matsuo, chief of the government's Office of Atomic Energy Policy Research.

Nuclear power accounts for 26.6 per cent of Japan's electricity and the government plans to double the number of plants to provide 43 per cent by 2010.

Jinzuro Takagi of the

Citizens' Nuclear Information Centre called the plans unrealistic and predicted that opposition to nuclear power would grow because of the accident.

To limit the public fallout, the government has begun a public relations campaign — referring to the reactor shutdown, for example, as "incident" instead of an "accident."

However, there has been conflicting information about the depth of anti-nuclear sentiment in Japan.

About 90 per cent of those responding to a government poll last year expressed some degree of uncertainty about nuclear power. But earlier this month anti-nuclear groups could not unseat a governor who favours building Japan's first nuclear reprocessing plant in his northern state.

In Mihama's state of Fukui, most local politicians have limited themselves to urging a thorough investigation of the accident and safety inspections of other plants.

State officials have said little, fearing that public concern about nuclear safety will hurt tourism.

Miwako Ogiso said her anti-nuclear organisation in Fukui has an uphill battle because the state's 12 nuclear plants provide jobs and business for the entire region. Some residents call the industry a "money tree" that has financed improvement of the state's infrastructure.

Yutaka Hatanaka, who runs a small grocery store next to the Mihama plant, seemed to reflect the general mood: "You won't find anybody who is opposed to nuclear power here."

There are signs of nervousness, however, in stories residents tell of deformed fish in the bay, deaths from leukemia and a rumour that heavy gates on the main road are designed to keep residents from leaving in case of disaster.

Not even Hatanaka appears entirely comfortable with his huge neighbour.

"They told us the plants were doubly and triply safe, then we find out the last-resort system went on," he said. "Where were the double triple measures?"

His wife, Mitsue, added with an air of resignation: "Nothing has changed in our lives" since the accident. "We just didn't eat fish for a few days."

3 students killed in Bangladesh campaign violence

DHAKA (AP) — A bomb blast at a tea shop killed two students and another youth has backed to death in attacks linked to national elections scheduled for later this month, police and news reports said Sunday.

The two students were drinking tea at the time of the bomb attack, which occurred Saturday in the town of Gaurnadi, 120 kilometres south of Dhaka, said local police officials contacted by telephone.

The two students belonged to the Awami League Party. Awami supporters accused activists of the rival Bangladesh Nationalist Party of planting the bomb, said the police officers, speaking on condition of anonymity.

The two parties are the main contenders in the Feb. 27 elections for a 300-member national parliament.

In the southeastern port city of Chittagong, an Awami League student leader was hacked to death Saturday, the English-language newspaper Star said.

The Awami League blamed the fundamentalist Jamaat-E-Islami Party for the killing, the newspaper said.

Aquino: Communists, rebel troops are no longer a major threat

BAGUIO, Philippines (Agencies) — President Corazon Aquino said Sunday the Communist insurgency is dying in the Philippines and right-wing rebels are a spent force with their leaders falling one by one.

Aquino said rebel soldiers squandered their last hope of popular support when they nearly wrecked the country's economy in a bloody coup attempt in December 1989.

Aquino, who has survived seven army rebellions in her five years in office, spoke before graduating cadets at the Philippine Military Academy in the mountain city of Baguio, 200 kilometres north of Manila.

Bursts of cheering erupted from families of the cadets when the names of two graduates, both relatives of rebel colonels who tried to overthrow Aquino in a coup attempt, were read out as they marched forward to receive their plaques from Aquino.

"Congratulations," Aquino said, saluting and shaking hands with Rene Honasan, 24, a cousin of fugitive coup leader Gregorio Honasan, and Oscar Canlas Jr., 22, whose father is serving a 12-year jail sentence for involvement in a 1987 mutiny.

Aquino said Communist guerrillas and right-wing army rebels were finished as a major threat to her government.

"The restoration of democracy has destroyed the moral pretensions of the insurgency, and left only its hardened elements clinging to its dying branches," Aquino declared.

She said the right-wing military

threat "is being systematically unravelled."

"The disgruntled heads from which that threat took direction are falling one by one," she said, referring to the arrest in Manila of four senior army rebel officers during the past month.

"The right-wing rebellion has spent its force," she added.

The Communist New People's Army, which has been fighting for 22 years to establish a Marxist state, has launched no major attack in the country in recent months. Defence officials say their armed strength has dwindled from a peak of more than 25,000 in 1987 to 17,500 this year.

Armed forces chief Lieutenant-General Rodolfo Biazon told reporters Friday coups in the Philippines "are a thing of the past."

But the Young Officers Union (YOU), an underground army faction, said it should not be written off.

"This crumbling government can no longer contest the prevalence of our cadres within the armed forces and other sectors and the existence of our revolutionary chain of command," YOU said in a statement Saturday.

"Some people tend to believe that the series of arrests is enough reason to write off the threat posed by the movement. It is a self-serving misinterpretation..."

Aquino warned Sunday the end of the cold war had brought new security risks for the world from aggressive nations.

"The end of the cold war spelled the end of unifying principle for each half into which the world was then divided," Aquino told

graduating cadets.

"Now the world faces the danger of being divided into as many blocs and by as many nations as feel they have the right because they have the power to impose their will on another," Aquino said.

In a clear reference to the Gulf war, Aquino said the ending of the cold war had not brought peace as had been hoped.

"The stakes may have changed — strategic resources and regional security against conquest, where before it was ideology and world domination."

"But the price is always the same," she added. "The sacrifices of the brave and the sufferings of the innocent."

Aquino has backed allied action against Iraq and has sent a 200-member medical team to Saudi Arabia.

She made no mention of the role of military bases in the Philippines in defending the region.

Manila asks \$5.7b for bases

The Philippines said Saturday it had proposed allowing the United States the use of the military base for another seven years in return for \$5.7 billion.

The United States is still pressing for a 10-year deal at least cost. At present it pays an annual \$481 million.

Clark Air Base and Subic Bay naval dockyard are the largest American military facilities in Asia. They played a major role during the Vietnam war and are now helping supply U.S. forces in the Gulf.

Government opponents Sm-

day denounced Aquino for declaring that she was willing to allow the United States to keep its military bases for seven years if it would meet Manila's price.

U.S. spokesman Stanley Schragger said technical committees will meet Monday in Manila to iron out the status of the 40,000 troops, military dependents and civilian employees at the six bases. He said "technical consultation" would resume in Washington later this month.

"The Philippines has expressed its willingness to host American military forces for a maximum of seven years," Mrs. Aquino said. "We have stressed to the American panel our need for immediate and sizeable capital infusion."

But Crispin Beltran, chairman of the May First Movement, a left-wing labour group, said any agreement to allow the bases to remain beyond the expiration of their leases in September is "unacceptable."

"We oppose the new bases treaty as we deem the presence of the bases in the country not only as an infringement on national sovereignty but that these bases... are in fact sources of the ills and crisis the country is facing," Beltran said.

The latest round of talks had been scheduled to end Friday but lasted into the night to reach an accord. Chief U.S. negotiator Richard Armitage left for Washington Saturday.

Both sides were optimistic that an accord could be reached despite differences on a few key issues.

A spokesman for the Philippine delegation, Raul Rabe, said

COLUMN

Frenchman wins world photo award

AMSTERDAM (AP) — French photographer Georges Merillon won the 1991 World Press Photo Award for his picture of villagers mourning a victim of ethnic unrest in Yugoslavia's Kosovo province. The picture by Merillon, of the Gamma Photo Agency, was selected from among 11,521 entries by 1,390 photographers from 61 nations, according to an announcement by the organising committee. Merillon won a 15,000-guilder (\$9,146) cash prize in the prestigious annual event for news photographers. His picture shows a 27-year-old man, Elshani Nasim, dead on his bed and surrounded by weeping women after he was shot by Yugoslavian government troops. Hundreds of people have died in Kosovo during several years of clashes between the province's ethnic Albanians and members of the Serb minority. Merillon will be presented his award by Dutch Premier Ruud Lubbers in an April 24 ceremony in Amsterdam, the announcement said. In the spot news category, Greg English of the Associated Press won an honourable mention for his picture of American troops in Saudi Arabia being addressed by U.S. Secretary of State James A. Baker III. Another French photographer, Frank A. Fournier of the Contact Press Images, won the general category with a picture of an abandoned child ravaged by AIDS. The winning picture in the sports category was by Irish photographer Billy Stickland and shows Cameroon soccer player Roger Milla being cheered by several of his teammates after scoring on a penalty pick against England in the World Cup last June.

"Dart" attacks continue in New York

NEW YORK (R) — Three more women reported being jabbed in the back with a sharp object by a mysterious attacker in a New York station, bringing the number of victims in the bizarre case up to nine, authorities said. During the rush hour a woman waiting for a train at Pennsylvania Station felt a sting in the middle of her back, rail officials said. She suffered a slight puncture wound but was unable to identify her assailant. Two more women came forward on Friday with similar reports, rail officials said. In all, nine women ranging in age from 19 to 33 have reported being struck in the buttocks or back with a sharp object since November. None of the objects used in the attacks has been recovered and all the women failed to spot their assailant. Last summer scores of well-dressed women in Manhattan were struck in the buttocks by needle darts. Police insist there is no connection between the two cases.

Huck Finn manuscript found

LOS ANGELES (AP) — The handwritten first half of the original text of Mark Twain's Huckleberry Finn, lost for more than a century, has been found in an attic trunk, Sotheby's Auction House said Wednesday. The 665-page document is especially significant because it varies widely from the published text. Twain scholars said it was an extraordinary literary discovery, one that will stir up fresh debate over one of the most studied books in the world. "All modern American literature comes from one book by Mark Twain called